Flores' cosmetic changes revealed by doc **METRO** / A17

Forex reserves hit all-time high of $43.2B **BUSINESS** / B1

Iran shocked: Student slams Khamenei **WORLD** / A20

Meralco to raise electricity rates this month **NEWS** / A16

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, November 7, 2009 ++ 11 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 332 P18

EAGLE EYES A Philippine Eagle Owl (Bubo Philippensis) surveys the world from the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Rescue Center in Quezon City. RG PEREZ

Gov't to press peace talks with MILF

By Cathy C. Yamsuan
in Manila
and Julie Alipala and Jeoffrey Maitem
Inquirer Mindanao

GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATORS WILL proceed with plans to resume peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) despite its purported involvement in the kidnapping of Irish missionary Fr. Michael Sinnott.

According to Annabelle Abaya, Presi-

GOV'T / A4

Shell sues Palace over price freeze

STARTING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE... What better sign that Yuletide is upon us than a lighted Christmas tree at the Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City. Shoppers stop and stare and, no doubt, dream of all the peace, goodwill and joys that only Christmas brings. EYN ACEDA

Oil firm seeks TRO, saying EO 839 illegal

By Amy R. Remo
and TJ Burgonio

THE OIL INDUSTRY IS TAKING ITS fight against the oil price freeze to the courts.

Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. has filed an urgent petition with the Makati Regional Trial Court to order Malacañang to lift Executive Order No. 839 freezing the prices of petroleum products in Luzon.

In a petition for prohibition, mandamus and injunction, Shell asked the court to issue a temporary restraining order against the continued implementation of the EO on grounds that it is unconstitutional.

It named as respondents Executive Secretary Edcardo Ermita and Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes, representing the Department of Energy-Department of Justice (DOE-DOJ) joint task force implementing the order.

On Oct. 24, Malacañang issued EO 839 freezing oil prices at Oct. 15 levels, as a means of mitigating the effects of a succession of typhoons that last month devastated parts of Luzon which remain un-

SHELL SUES / A4

FACE OF THE FILIPINO With his picture on the cover of TIME Magazine's Asia edition, it is clear that Manny Pacquiao's time has come. 'It's amazing,' says the phenomenal boxing champion.

Pacman shows RP 'small but mighty'

By Franck T.J. Ochoa

HOLLYWOOD—MANNY'S Time has come.

The Filipino ring icon, generally regarded as the world's pound-for-pound champion, graces the cover of Time Magazine Asia edition—where he is featured in a five-page story—that will hit the US and global magazine stands this weekend.

Not only is he the first Filipino to grace the weekly magazine's cover since the late former President Cora-

PACMAN / A3

Palace: We'll not be pressured by Jalosjos

By TJ Burgonio

MALACAÑANG WILL NOT BE PRESsured into granting convicted child rapist Romeo Jalosjos absolute pardon just because he is planning to run for his old post as representative of a district in Zamboanga del Norte.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said yesterday that the Office of the President would treat the former lawmaker's application for absolute pardon like "any other application."

"We will not be pressured by the desire of a candidate. It will have to go through a process," Remonde told the reporters.

Earlier at a briefing, Remonde said that as far as he knew, the Board of Pardons and Parole (BPP) had made no recommendation on Jalosjos' application to the Office of the President.

"We vehemently deny that we are endorsing such an application. We are treating the application of Mr. Jalosjos like any other application.

PALACE / A4

SoKor woman passes driver's test on 950th try

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—A woman in South Korea who tried to pass the written exam for a driver's license with near-daily attempts since April 2005 has finally succeeded on her 950th time.

The aspiring driver spent more than 5 million won ($4,200) in application fees, but until now had failed to score the minimum 60 out of a possible 100 points needed to get behind the wheel for a driving test.

Cho So-eun, 68, finally passed the written exam with a score of 60 on Wednesday, said Choi Seung-

SOKOR / A4

Hillary to visit RP on way to Apec meeting

By Alcuin Papa

US SECRETARY OF STATE Hillary Clinton will be making a lightning visit to the Philippines next week on her way to Singapore for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Leaders' Summit, according to a diplomatic source.

Clinton will be arriving on Thursday and stay for about 24 hours before flying out again to visit other Asian countries and proceed to Singapore for the Apec conference on Nov. 10, said the source who asked not to be identified for lack of authority to talk to the media.

She is scheduled to hold closed-door meetings with President Macapagal-Arroyo and Foreign Secretary Alberto

HILLARY / A15

DOUBLE TAKE President Macapagal-Arroyo makes a point after awarding outstanding microentrepreneurs during the "Go Negosyo" caravan in Balanga, Bataan. CONN CASTILLEJO

COMING SOON US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is expected to visit Manila next week. AP

Mar supports Ping's alibi in Dacer case

By Norman Bordadora

THE DEFENSE OF SEN. PANFILO LACson that he was out of the country when he supposedly gave the order for the 2000 Dacer-Corbito murders was boosted by Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas' affirmation of an affidavit yesterday.

In his sworn statement, Roxas told the Department of Justice's panel of prosecutors that he, then the trade secretary, and Lacson were together in the

PAM SUPPORTS / A6

'Teddy Boy' JBC nominee to SC

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
and Norman Bordadora

THERE IS NO SHAME IN BEING AN appointee of President Macapagal-Arroyo to the Supreme Court.

This is according to Makati Rep. Teodoro "Teddy Boy" Locsin, who is among the three dozen aspirants being interviewed by the Judicial and Bar

'TEDDY BOY' / A6

US Army shrink turns psycho, kills 12

FORT HOOD, TEXAS—AN Army psychiatrist set to be shipped overseas opened fire at the Fort Hood, Texas, Army post on Thursday (Friday in Manila), authorities said, a rampage that killed 12 people and left 31 wounded in the worst mass shooting ever at a military base in the United States.

The gunman was wounded but alive and in stable condition under military guard, said Lt. Gen. Rob Cone at Fort Hood. "I would say his death is not imminent," Cone said.

Col. Ben Danner said the suspect was shot four times and was in critical condition.

The man was identified as Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, a 39-year-old from Virginia.

He is an American Muslim of Palestinian origin who joined the Army against his parents' wishes and was about to be deployed to Afghanistan, officials and media reports said. Hasan was a military psychiatrist who dealt with troops returning from combat, officials said.

US ARMY / A15

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2*
18 16 27 3 16 1

SUERTRES*
5 6 7 4 2 2

FOUR DIGIT*
5 2 8 6 1 4 3

MEGALOTTO 6/45
5 8 12 28 30 37
P49,833,046.80

Arms cache of Alvin Flores gang seized

CAMP ALEJO SANTOS, BULACAN—GOVERNMENT agents seized rifles, grenades and ammunition in a raid of a house believed to be a temporary hideout of the Alvin Flores robbery gang.

No one was at the house in Bocka Village in Plaridel, Bulacan, when the search team came yesterday.

The agents also seized police uniforms that police said the gang used in its criminal activities.

Flores, one of the country's most notorious criminals and leader of the gang believed to be behind the daring robbery in Cauayan City in Makati two weeks ago, was gunned down along with three gang members in a encounter with government agents in a beach house in Consolacion, Cebu.

Senior Supt. Clemente Hanson, acting Bulacan police chief, said the raiders—made up of Bulacan policemen and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agents—took 17 hours to get a warrant to legally enter the house. They also made sure there was no booby trap and no one waited to ambush, he said.

The search came at about 1 p.m.

Ramos said the house was owned by a certain Alfonso Silvan, who is now being sought for questioning although police did not say if they consider her a suspect.

Seized were an M-14 rifle, an M-16 rifle fitted with an M-203 grenade launcher, 16 203 grenades, pistols and ammunition. Also found were what police described as the robbery gang's other "tools of the trade"—bullet-proof vests, a bolt cutter and a dodge hammer.

Ramos said the NBI and Bulacan police agents were pursuing the associates of the gang.

Police said the gang rented the house as a temporary hideout only two weeks ago. They are also following up on the information that a brother of Alvin Flores owned the house.

"The rest of the gang is now on the run with no leaders to command them," said Ramos.

"In their talk they were unable to hide their high-powered firearms," he said.

The Flores gang has been implicated in 14 robberies this year and 25 in 2008 in Metro Manila and nearby areas.

Flores and three of his men—Kirbie Gipanie Hipona, Jhun Alejandro Mendez Salamanca, and Roger Sanchez—were killed in the Cebu shootout on Oct. 29.

Arrested in the shootout was Rene Hadronsala, who is now being considered as a state witness against gang members. Gerardo Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon

NBI agents and police raid the suspected hideout of the notorious Alvin Flores robbery gang in Plaridel, Bulacan, and seize firearms, fake police uniforms and vehicle license plates. BY EDDIE MATANGUIHAN

GMA critics ridicule suggestions she can run as VP

By Michaela Lim Ubac

SUGGESTIONS THAT President Macapagal-Arroyo run for vice president in 2010 were smeared with skepticism and even ridiculed by a party ally.

Senoyal senators renewed at Rep. Eraldo Suarez's reassurance that Ms Arroyo could still occupy a national elective post after her term ends in June.

"It's a formula for disaster if you ask me," said Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, a longtime Arroyo ally.

Enrile, Pimentel and Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. in a text message.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan declared whether President Arroyo was even toying with the idea.

"Her approval ratings are in the negative. Public disenchantment over her leadership is widespread nationwide and nationwide all sectors. She will not risk running and losing. The stakes are too high and the risk are too great," he said by phone.

"Most likely she will seek a local post where she has better chances of winning," said Pangilinan, referring to reports that she will be running for a congressional seat in Pampanga.

A stunned Sen. Francis Escudero said the idea was explosive.

"That is too much already. Why earn people turn their back on power? I guess the saying is true: power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely," he said.

'Vice' presidency

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano ridiculed a "Gloc-Gloria" tandem of Defense Secretary Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro Jr. and President Arroyo.

"Isn't her presidency plagued with vice? That is stealing, cheating, and lying, so in a sense people are already used to an Arroyo vice presidency. It will be Gibo that will be silenced," said Cayetano in a text message.

The senator said the tandem may keep politicians sup-

port of the administration coalition party intact and lead to massive use of government resources, "but getting popular support will go through a very difficult is almost impossible."

"Then Gibo runs to spend his precious time answering issues on the nine years of the Arroyo administration. Whatever way we look at it, it won't be good for the country," he said.

His sister, Senator Pia, was almost speechless when told of the news.

"I'm shocked at the proposal but I won't make any statement to the meantime," she said.

Surprises

The two declared vice presidential candidates were also skeptical of a vice presidential run for Ms Arroyo, but did not close that possibility outright.

Sen. Loren Legarda said Hindendang was just "floating" the idea to test the waters.

"I think she's running for Congress in Pampanga. While she is not legally barred from doing so, I don't think she will do it. But who knows? There are surprises in politics," she said.

Sought for comment, Sen. Mar Roxas lovingly dismissed that having Ms Arroyo as his opponent would even give him greater chances of winning the vice presidency.

"Why should we fear that? What we (Liberal Party) stand for is righteousness. They symbolize wrong deeds," he said.

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GMA political plan known by Dec. 1, her lawyer says

By TJ Burgonio

THOSE DYING TO HEAR PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo declare her political plan should just wait for the Dec. 1 deadline for the filing of certificate of candidacy (CoC), her election lawyer said yesterday.

"By Dec. 1, people will know whether she will run or not. Having a deadline for the filing of CoC, the people will not be surprised anymore if she's indeed running," Romulo Macalintal said. "Let's just wait until Dec. 1. Let's have more suspense on this issue."

The election body has set Dec. 1 as the last day for the filing of CoC for those seeking elective posts.

Macalintal turned up as a Malacañang briefing to address speculations Ms Arroyo would seek election as a lawmaker in 2010 representing her home province's second district, and did little to douse these.

He reminded the public that seeking a congressional seat often serving the presidency should not be frowned upon.

"We should not inhibit the Congress of the Philippines because it is co-equal department of the executive and judicial branches of government," he said in the joint briefing with Press Secretary Cerge Remonde. "So nobody can say that will go down a notch; know if now the decision to run for that position."

Ms Arroyo has ordered speculations of her possible congressional run due to her nearly weekly forays to her hometown Lubao and other parts of Pampanga's second congressional district.

But aside Ms Arroyo nor her spokesperson have been forthright about her political plan.

Macalintal said she has not discussed her plan after June 30, 2010.

"We have not even considered her supposed plan to run for Congress, how much more her supposed plan to run for vice president?" he said, adding, "I think the President has other important things to do and think about, rather than concentrate on her political plans in the coming elections."

Whether she decides to run as a congressman or vice president, Ms Arroyo would be as capable to any of these posts, having served as a senator, vice president and president, the lawyer said.

Ms Arroyo's long-time election lawyer reminded the public that Ms Arroyo is neither barred from seeking public office other than the presidency nor is she mandated by law to resign if she files her CoC.

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Pirates hijack ship with 14 Pinoys on board

MOGADISHU—SOMALI PIRATES HIJACKED a Greek-owned vessel full of wheat in the Indian Ocean on Thursday and dominated to hand three Spanish captives in the hands of two suspected gunmen being held in Spain.

The Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier MV Delvina was hijacked with seven Ukrainians and 14 Filipinos on board, the EU antipiracy naval force said.

Andrew Mwangura of the Kenya-based East Africa Seafarers' Association said the MV Delvina was seized some 460 km northwest of the island of Mtsheguesi.

A spokesperson for the Greek Merchant Marine Ministry said the MV Delvina was sailing from the Mediterranean to the Kenyan port of Mombasa and that the company Monbussy Shipping and Trading contacted the ministry.

While there was a lull in hijackings during monsoon season, pirates have ramped up attacks in the past few weeks and are now holding some 10 vessels and at least 187 hostages.

Turkish navy commandos detained five pirates trying to hijack a Greek boat in the Gulf of Aden, the Turkish military said on Thursday.

The pirate gangs—some made up of former fishermen angered by the presence of foreign fishing fleets in Somali waters—have made tens of millions of dollars in ransoms.

While hostages are usually released unharmed once a ransom has been paid, some kidnappings have taken different turns.

Pirates said on Thursday they had taken three male hostages from a Spanish fishing vessel seized and may hand them to the families of two suspected pirates being held by Spain. Reuters

RP seeks release of seamen

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT has launched negotiations to secure the release of several Filipino crew members of ships hijacked by pirates off the coast of Somalia, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said.

In a statement, the DFA said the embassies in Singapore and Nairobi were ordered to assist in securing the safe and immediate release of the two Filipino crew of a Malaysian fishing vessel hijacked by Somali pirates.

That Union 3, with its crew of two Filipinos, two Ukrainians, and 21 Russians, was seized by pirates last Oct. 29, 200 nautical miles north of Seychelles.

The vessel's principal, the DBS said, is based in Hong Kong. Kristine L. Alave

Nickel mining project nixed

By Alexis Pepa

LOCAL OFFICIALS OF MISAMIS ARE UP in arms over the granting of an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) to a nickel mining project in the area that could threaten Initarow conservation areas and the popular Puerto Cabeza resort.

Led by Oriental Mindoro Gov. Arnan Panaligan and Occidental Mindoro Gov. Josephine Ramirez-Sato, the officials said they would fight the project "all the way."

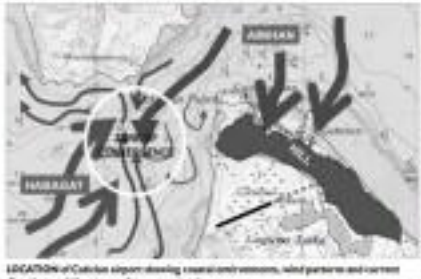
They called on Environment Secretary Lito Atienza and President Macapagal-Arroyo to impose a 25-year moratorium on any mining activity in the province. They added that their opposition to the mining project was ignored by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

"If they can allow large-scale mining in my area, we have the authority over our local government. If they file cases against us we can, and will continue to fight for the interest of our constituents and the environment," said Ramirez-Sato.

Panaligan said they were not opposed to the government's policy on mining. "We are opposed to this project because the ECC is irregular. It seems that the process for this ECC was done summarily," Panaligan said.

Last Oct. 14, Norwegian firm Intex Resources was given an ECC by the DENR to mine 11,250 hectares in the island. The project is expected to extract 100 to 120 million tons of nickel ore over a period of 15 to 20 years.

The project covers around 9,000 ha in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro, with the rest covering the municipalities of Victoria, Pola and Socorro in Oriental Mindoro.



LOCATION of Caticlan airport showing coastal environment, wind patterns and current directions and the proposed runway extension.

DENR warns vs leveling Caticlan hill

A LEGAL TUSSLE HAS LED THE PEOPLE to prevent the leveling of the hill in Caticlan to make way for the extension of the airport runway because it is unconstitutional.

"A people's movement should be formed to see to it that it is prevented because it is against the Constitution," said Boni Perillo Barangay, a former dean of the UP College of Law, at the recent Kapihan sa Iloilo.

Barangay cited section 79 of the 1987 Constitution: "The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced ecology in accordance with the harmony of nature."

He expressed his opinion after hearing the warning of an expert of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that the beaches of Boracay will disappear if the hill is leveled as required by the Caticlan airport upgrade project.

Dr. Ricardo Jacobona of the Mines & Geosciences Bureau of the DENR conducted a case study on Boracay's micro-climate where he claims that the Barangay Caticlan Zone of Micro-Climatic Convergence is where low- and high-energy environments converge generating mild surface currents and breezy waves highly conducive to deposition of white coral-rich beaches of Boracay.

Jacobona explained that the longshore currents of northeast and Habagat converge at Caticlan Point.

The morphologist is convinced that leveling the hill will trigger local hydrodynamic changes in the area that would eventually lead to the erosion of beaches along Boracay and drying up of the Lapu-Lapu Lake.

"That particular hill is a climate barrier that deflects and converts strong monsoonal winds into gentle breezes that cool land while along the beaches of Boracay and Caticlan," said Jacobona.

Stranded OFWs in Jeddah hope to be arrested, deported

JEDDAH—LABOR DELEGATES on the concrete base of a bridge pylon, with her swollen belly and explains her predicament—she is five months preg. nant with twins, and wants to go home to give birth.

But after four years of working as a maid in Saudi Arabia, she lacks both her passport and the crucial exit permit that would allow her to return to the Philippines.

So for three months Dolacruz has lived on the pavement under a massive elevated eight-lane highway in central Jeddah, hoping to be rounded up by immigration police, then given documents and a ticket home.

Around her, maybe 1,000 other contract workers and asylum seekers in darkness under the flyover in the bustling Red Sea port. All have been trying for months to get deported.

In another area beside hundreds of Africans, also seeking to leave.

Some find abusive or nonpaying employers, others were abandoned by sponsors, and still more came on pilgrimages or nearby Mecca but then stayed on to work illegally.

In each case, under Saudi rules for the millions of foreigners working in the kingdom, their documents were taken away on arrival. Without travel papers or an official exit permit, they cannot leave.

"If you are working here, no one will ask your passport to show by the employer," said Andrew Occiones, a Jeddah coordinator for Migrante, which helps overseas workers from the Philippines.

He said the numbers under the bridge seem to be rising, possibly because it has become more difficult recently for those without proper papers to get jobs.

They include people who entered after their work permits expired, pilgrims who stayed on after the end of the hajj and people who entered the country illegally.

For most, leaving is much harder than getting in. The problem is most acute in Jeddah, gateway to the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

In Riyadh, there is nowhere for paperless immigrants to go, and under Islamic Sharia law a pregnant woman like Dolacruz is more likely to be jailed for having illicit sex and then expelled after giving birth, diplomats say. AFP

8th Annual Roche Asian Oncology Forum

November 6-7, 2008
The Mactan Shangri-La, Cebu City

The annual Roche Asian Oncology Forum will be held in the Philippines for the first time. Leading cancer specialists from China, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia and the Philippines will gather to discuss advancements in cancer care and treatment from both Asian and Western perspectives.

Recent developments in lung, breast, colon and stomach cancers - the most common types of cancers found in the world that cause over a million deaths per year - will be discussed. The forum highlights clinical trial data characteristic to the Asian population.

The 8th Annual Roche Asian Oncology Forum (RAOF) is held in partnership with the Philippine Society of Medical Oncology.

RADEMS

Roche

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, November 1, 2008
31st Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Rom 14:7-9, 10, 12-15
Gospel: Lk 14:1-6

Jesus said to his disciples, "And so I tell you: use filthy money to make friends for yourselves, so that when it fails, these people may welcome you into the eternal homes.

"Whoever can be trusted in little can be trusted in great matters; whoever is dishonest in little matters will also be dishonest in greater ones. So if you have not been worthy to handle filthy money, who could entrust you with genuine riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with things that are not really yours, who will give you the valuable which is your own?

"No servant can serve two masters. Either he does not like the one and loves the other, or he regards one highly and the other with contempt. You cannot give yourself both to God and to Money."

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and sneered at Jesus. He said to them, "You do your best to be considered righteous by people, but God knows the heart, and what men high among humans is hateful to God."

Commentary:

Some worldly people are quite devout. Some can think of many ways to use God under worldly motives... formally or dishonestly. Jesus, however, warns his disciples to use their worldly wealth in ways that are spiritually devoted. We are not to use our wealth to control others or to try to protect our future, but to their selves. Describing others and using our earthly resources to be a blessing and a friend to others are our principal instructions here. Our wealth can be a blessing. As faithful stewards of God's blessings, we are storing up treasures in heaven.

God wants to shower us with blessings but He wants to give them to us, wanting us to take care of the little things first, so that we can be trusted to be a good steward over the larger blessings. Until we can manage success in the little tasks which He gives us, we are not qualified to take on the bigger tasks that He has waiting for us. Love in life is our job and mission to fulfill God's purpose in the fullest, otherwise God can't receive the honor, praise, and glory due to Him.

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Sagip Pinoy lists qualities of ideal leader

KILUSAN SAGIP PINOY, A MULTISECTOR alliance against poverty and hunger, yesterday said the country's next president should have experience in managing the economy and the leadership to make economic programs work.

Sagip Pinoy presidents Crispin Beltran Jr. said the country's next president should have the capability and the experience in turning the economy around because he would face the daunting task of saving the economy and solving poverty and hunger.

"What we need is a leader who can inspire confidence in the business sector because investments create jobs and the increased income jobs always benefits the people," Beltran said.

Sagip Pinoy earlier presented their criteria for choosing the new president in 2010, as they called for a true leader to come out and join the politicians who have already declared intentions to run for president but failed to meet those criteria.

The Sagip Pinoy movement's criteria in choosing the next President in 2010 includes a good track record in public service even in his youth, longtime fighter against graft and corruption, and consistency in the fight against corruption, and perseverance and competence in issues where action is needed.

Soriano said the country's next president should have experience in managing an economy and turning it around after a slump, just like what happened in Subic, Zambales, and neighboring towns when the US was forced to abandon their military bases in the 1990s.

Subic and other towns in Zambales were also devastated by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, which dumped volcanic ash and flooded provinces in Central Luzon with lahar flows.

He said that when the Philippines formed to restore the vacancy of the US naval base in Subic, the local economy suffered a slump but good economic planning allowed Subic to become a freeport to provide employment to at least 90,000 workers in the freeport alone and stimulate the economy of neighboring areas.

RP buys rice from Vietnam and Thailand

By Rue T. Dizhondro

THE PHILIPPINES, THE WORLD'S TOP rice importer, is buying 250,000 metric tons of 25 percent broken white rice from Vietnam and Thailand, National Food Authority (NFA) spokesperson Rex Estoperez said.

The suppliers are Vietnam Southern Food Corp. (Vinafood I Corp.), which will source its rice from Vietnam, and Daewoo International Corp. of Korea, which will supply rice from Vietnam and/or Thailand.

Vinafood Corp. will ship 150,000 tons at $480 per ton, including cost and freight, for delivery in January 2010.

The rest, or 100,000 tons, will come from Daewoo at $468.50 per ton, for delivery between January and April 2010.

The NFA also has the option to buy an additional 25 percent of the tendered volume to lock in the low prices from the winning bidders, Estoperez said.

Vinafood and Daewoo offered the lowest prices during the NFA rice tender on Nov. 4. That auction, which may only be the first in a series, was held a month earlier than usual.

Manila is buying rice early to lock in good prices and secure stocks for early 2010, when the effects of crop damage due to recent typhoons are expected to be felt.

"We have to... glean on early importation to maintain the supply and price stability of the basic staple," NFA administrator Jessup B Navarro said in a statement.

NFA deputy administrator and link committee chairperson Ludovico Jarina said that the stricken prices were "good." This gives Manila flexibility to buy again next month if the government's interagency committee recommends the same.

The decision will have to be made as soon as next week to get ahead of anticipated tightness in supply—and subsequently high prices—by next year.

The Philippines, a perennial net importer, has said it may buy about 2 million tons of rice for 2010 supplies.

Countdown for Carmona's Sorteo festival starts today

THE 100-DAY COUNTDOWN FOR Carmona's Sorteo Festival, the 152-year-old celebration of the town's agricultural roots, starts today with a show featuring glimpses of the events that will take place in the festival proper on February.

Carmona, Cavite Mayor Boy Loyola will launch the start of the countdown with a colorful presentation explaining the history of the festival, to be dedicated by Carmona Performing Arts Group (CPAG). The next finals for the singing contest will also be held and will be judged by music luminaries Mon del Rosario, Pinoy Tan and The Crystalaires.

Originally known as "Fiestang de los Tres Caminantes del Pueblo de Carmona," Sorteo is a celebration of Carmona's roots as an agricultural haven. Starting on Feb. 20, 2012, the festival features the luxury of Carmona's communal lands. Under the Ayuntamiento rule, the lottery was a democratic means to create equal economic opportunities for farmers.

The week-long festival proper starts on Feb. 18 with Parada Sorteo, a parade of Carmona's government officials, public servants, prominent families, followed by street dancing and capped with group dance competitions. Other activities like Gabi ng Parangal at Buong Carmona, Gintong Himig-Gawang Bayan (singing contest finalists), coronation of Binibining Sorteo 2010 and the rigaudon under the Sorteo ng Bakol, the raffle-off of the remaining conventional lands.

'Teddy Boy' one of JBC's nominees to Supreme Court

From page A1

Council (JBC) for the three vacancies in the high court to be created by retirements this year.

"Of course not, nobody else can appoint to that post. It is an honor to be appointed by a great person. Do you see anyone smarter on the horizon?" Locsin told the lawyers when asked if being marked out as an Arroyo appointee to the Supreme Court was a bad thing.

There will be three vacancies in the high court by next month, including the one created last June 5 by Associate Justice Leonardo Quisumbing. Associate Justice Minita Chico-Nazario is scheduled to retire on Dec. 3.

On concerns that a court dominated by Arroyo appointees would not be impartial should a case be filed against her when her term ends in 2010, Locsin said the Supreme Court would remain its independence on any such case "by respecting due process and respecting the Bill of Rights."

Locsin would not comment on the odds of him snagging one of the three vacancies. "It is hard enough to predict the past, what more the future," he said.

The former newspaper publisher has been named among the candidates in former President Joseph Estrada's amnesty slate but he has stated that he was done merely out of friendship and that he was realistic about his chances of moving on to the Upper House.

"I'm informed there is a deafening clamor for me to be senator, which might explain why I can't hear it. I'm puzzled why many don't find me charming," Locsin said.

Brain power

He believed he would be better off aspiring for a high post in another branch of government.

"It's time to use my brain at its full capacity before I get too old and lose it altogether," Locsin said.

Quisumbing's retirement left Chief Justice Reynato Puno as the only magistrate in the current court appointed by a president other than Ms Arroyo.

Then President Fidel Ramos appointed Puno and Quisumbing in 1991 and 1998, respectively. It was Ms Arroyo, however, who named Puno as Chief Justice in 2006.

Ms Arroyo's appointees included Associate T. Carpio, Renato Corona, Conchita Carpio-Morales, Presbitero J. Velasco Jr., Antonio Eduardo B. Nachura, Teresita J. Leonardo-de Castro, Arturo D. Brion, Diosdado Peralta, Lucas Bersamin, Mariano del Castillo and Roberto Abad.

Short list

Mishandling has yet to announce Ms Arroyo's choice to replace Tuazon Dantinago.

The JBC has nominated in Malacañang a short list that included Court of Appeals justices Noel Tijam, Martin Villarama Jr. and Hakim Abdulwahid. It is still conducting interviews for new applicants that could be in the running for the seat Quisumbing has left.

The JBC is the constitutionally mandated body that screens applicants to the Supreme Court. After interviewing applicants and after deliberations, it takes a vote and submits to Malacañang a list of at least three nominees for every vacancy.

Ms Arroyo has 90 days after the retirements of a justice to name his or her replacement.

Watchdogs

Two watchdog groups have been formed to monitor the appointments process at a time when Ms Arroyo's appointees are expected to dominate the high tribunal. Those are the Supreme Court Appointments Watch (Scow) and the Bantay Katarungan.

"I think there have been some improvements, such as the open voting and the public interviews," said Transparency and Accountability Network's Vince Lazatin, a Scow convenor.

Not even smoke

The JBC has made known to the public how its members voted or produce its short list of nominees. It has also opened to the public its interviews of applicants.

Lazatin said these seemed to be a question on what Ms Arroyo really wanted from nominees before picking the next justice.

"There are candidates that have made the short list numerous times and yet they don't get appointed," Lazatin said. "I beg the question, what does the President really want?"

To this example, Lazatin raised the frequent indication of appointee-court Justice Villarama as the short list. Villarama was appointed to have been picked to replace Tuazon-Santiago but she has been denied.

"He has a reputation of being straight and that's important," Lazatin said of Villarama.

Lazatin adverted to the saying "where there's smoke, there's fire" in describing the reputation of some magistrates who are sometimes linked in irregularities.

"With Justice Villarama, there's even no smoke," Lazatin said.

Palace: We'll not be pressured by Jalosjos on his absolute pardon

From page A1

said we are still waiting for it," he said.

An official of the BJP had earlier said that Jalosjos applied for absolute pardon on Sept. 30, or two months before the Dec. 1 deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy for the May 2010 elections.

The application was purportedly transmitted by the Office of the President to the BJP on Oct. 22, for evaluation and recommendation as to his eligibility for pardon.

An absolute pardon would restore Jalosjos' right of suffrage (the right to vote and be voted upon), and allow him to pursue his plan to seek his old seat in Congress.

He had indicated that he might run again if pardoned, and had said he was sure to win.

Final say from DOJ

Acting Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera said recently that the Department of Justice had the final say on whether to recommend or Malacañang the grant of absolute pardon to convicts like Jalosjos.

Devanadera said her office had yet to receive any application, or a referral of an application to grant Jalosjos absolute pardon.

"If I can be irritated (at) Shid (Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita) over the Read reconciliation would be from the office of the (Justice) Secretary," she said, adding that the matter would then be subjected to the review and assessment of the Office of the President.

Only the President has the authority to grant convicts absolute pardon, and Devanadera refused to say whether Jalosjos was qualified for it.

"I have not received any application. They have not forwarded any recommendation," she said, adding:

"Actually, I'm surprised."

A woman first

Bonoan said it was too early to say whether Jalosjos' application for pardon would be granted.

"The case will solely be based on the merits, and any decision on that right now will be speculative because it has not reached the Office of the President. We will cross the bridge when we get there," he said.

Asked if Ms Arroyo's being a woman would be a factor in the evaluation of the case, Bonoan said: "The President is always her. She is a woman, and as a President. And therefore, you can't take this away when the time comes for her to decide."

The Makati Regional Trial Court convicted Jalosjos in December 1997 of raping an 11-year-old girl, and sentenced him to two life terms.

While behind bars, he won reelection in 1998 and 2001. He was dropped from the rolls of the House of Representatives in 2002, when the Supreme Court affirmed his guilt.

Five years later, Ms Arroyo commuted Jalosjos' sentence to 30 years, three months and three days.

The commutation, along with good conduct time allowance, allowed him to walk free for good, despite having served only 12 years. With a report from Norman Bordadora

Wrong attribution

AN Inquirer STORY on Friday morning that former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos had asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to grant him absolute pardon was erroneously attributed to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, administrator of the Pardon and Probation Administration, an office under the Department of Justice.

The source of the Inquirer story was not Ermita but an officer of the Board of Pardons and Parole (BPP), who said that the application of Jalosjos was under study.

Hernandez's office, the Public Assistance and Information Section, is not part of the BPP and he, therefore, cannot speak for the BPP.

The Inquirer deeply regrets the error.

Mar supports Ping's alibi in Dacer case

From page A1

party of then Presidente Joseph Estrada that attended the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000.

"I recall that Sen. Diollo Lacson, then director general and chief of the Philippine National Police, was a member of this delegation attending the said summit and was with us in the US at the time," Roxas said.

He said the presidential party that included Lacson left Manila on Sept. 4, 2000 and returned on Sept. 13, 2000.

ROXAS

LACSON

Roxas corroborated Lacson's claim in his own affidavit that he was with Estrada's party in the United Nations when the supposed conversation between him and then Senate Sgt. Michael Ray Aquino transpired in a car.

Kill order

In his testimony before the Manila Regional Trial Court (RTC) early in September and in his own sworn statement, former Senate Sgt. Dan Simeon said he was seated in the SUV's front passenger seat and overheard Lacson ordering Aquino to kill publisher Salvador "Bubby" Dacer.

Mercado said in his own testimony that the conversation occurred in September or October 2000. He said Estrada was one of the enemy at that time.

In his defense, Lacson said he was with Estrada abroad at that time and could not have given the kill order as claimed by Mateos.

He said Estrada no longer had another trip abroad in the last quarter of that year.

Operation Delta

Lacson has been tagged as among those behind the abduction and murder of Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito.

Dacer and Corbito were abducted on Nov. 24, 2000, as they approached the intersection of Edsa Roxas Street and Presidente Quirino Highway near the border of Makati and Manila.

Their abandoned car was found three days later in Mariquina, Cavite, and their charred remains months later in the notorious Operation Delta.

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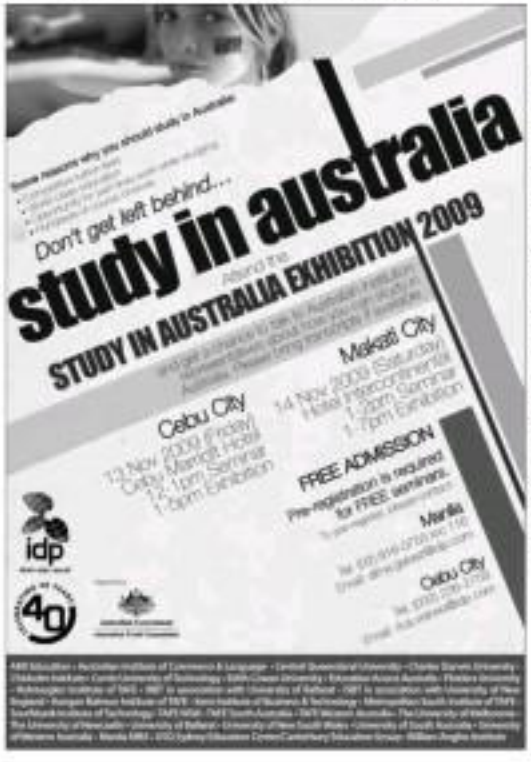
Motive

In a privilege speech at the finance hair in September, Lacson tagged Estrada as the one with the "motive" to order the killing of Dacer.

The DOJ has since reopened the inquiry into the twin murders.

After being given an extension to file a counter-affidavit, Lacson appeared before the DOJ panel on Oct. 28 to formally deny his involvement in the killings.

He said he was in the United States with Estrada at the time he supposedly ordered Dacer's killing. With a report from Inquirer Research



SoKor woman passes driver's...

From page A1

chol, a police official at the drivers' license agency in Jeonju, 210 km south of Seoul.

For selling vegetables

Police said Cha took the test handouts of times, but had no specific reason why he wanted to pass the exam.

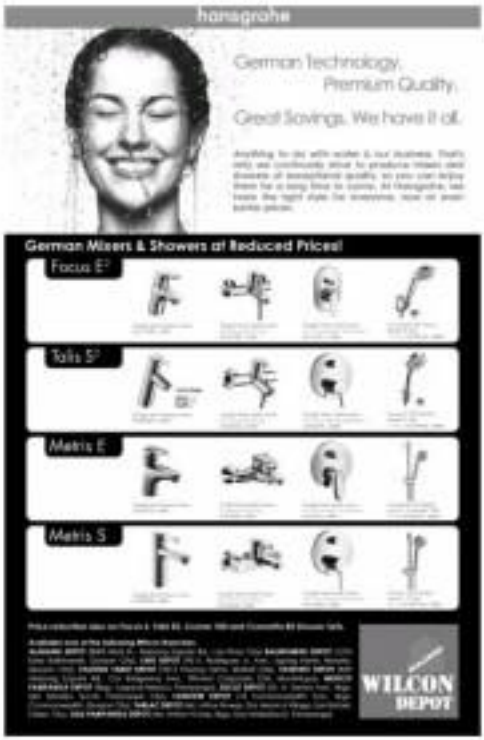
Cha, who sells vegetables from a roadside stall in Jeonju, was arrested on Wednesday and charged with violating the road traffic law.

Local media said the took the test 950 times.

But next, the hard part is yet to begin.

Now the must pass a driving test before gaining her license, Choi said.

Repeated calls to Cha seeking comment were unanswered. He told the Korea Times newspaper she canceled the license for her vegetable-selling business. AP



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By:

Prof. Stefano Del Prato

(Professor of Endocrinology & Metabolic Diseases, School of Medicine, University of Pisa, Italy)

on "THE NATURAL HISTORY OF BETA CELL IN TYPE 2 DIABETES"

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11th R.E.F. Professorial Lecture
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EDSA Shangri-La Hotel

Shell sues Palace over oil prices freeze

By Jocelyn Ad

Are a source of calamity

The oil industry, supported by big business groups, has strongly opposed the EO and called for its lifting, arguing that oil companies have been incurring losses because of the huge gap between the cost and the pump price.

Roberto S. Kintanar, Shell vice president for communications, claimed the EO did not meet the conditions prescribed in the Constitution for determining the exceptional circumstances that would warrant the Chief Executive's exercise of emergency powers.

Unconstitutional

According to the Shell petition, President Macapagal-Arroyo, through the EO, "unilaterally determined the existence of exceptional circumstances warranting the direct intervention of the chief executive, including Congress," in direct contravention of the Constitution.

It also disputed the EO's premise that the President's exercise of emergency powers was based on the Oil Deregulation Law.

It said the Oil Deregulation Law was not the open-ended legislation in this case, "it does not contain reasonable terms and restrictions set by the Constitution."

Shell similarly raised serious concerns about the "grave and irreparable injury" that EO 839 would inflict not just on the oil industry but also on business and the larger economy as well as the Philippines' international reputation, which it said has outweighed whatever the intended benefits it would bring to the people.

A grave consequence of the EO, it said, was that it may "logically result in supply shortages, rationing of petroleum products, and the development and growth of illegitimate market for oil products in the country."

Threats and blackmail

Responding to industry warnings that prices of petroleum products could spike once the EO is lifted, presidential economic spokesperson Cielo Villaluz said the oil firms had made the government cannot stop the oil companies from "doing what they want to do," the joint task force would continue to keep tabs on prices and take action, if needed.

Ramon Villavicencio, chair of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, called the petition a threat and blackmail.

He also urged the Supreme Court to act on the petition immediately and lift the EO, which he said was "hurting the economy."

Villavicencio said he would propose that the increase be suspended over a three-week period, of instead P1.50 a liter per week.

Palace warning

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde shrugged off Villavicencio's warnings about future increases.

SHELL puts to court by contempt Malacañang's Executive Order 839 freezing the prices of petroleum products in Luzon. AFP/FILE PHOTO

"We will allow the spokesmen and executives of oil companies to let off steam," he said, "but should not be fooled by these statements ... If they will divert or resort to hoarding, we will throw the book at them," Remonde said.

Remonde also warned the industry against pursuing gross inventory.

"In the meantime, we continue to appeal to the oil companies and their executives to stop ranting and warning because they are not helping the situation, and definitely they cannot blackmail this government," he said.

The President has refused a request from the oil industry for a dialogue, saying any consultations should be done with the JOA-DOE joint task force.

Behave responsibly

Olivar said the government could also appeal to the oil companies to behave responsibly by being transparent in their operations.

"They position is commendable that is covered, with very firm substantiations, and I commend a big slice of people's budgets. The nature of their business demands that they behave more responsibly than other regular businessmen," he said.

For starters, they should justify future price increases, "if they can at all how the public feels," Olivar said.

The oil companies should also "shed light" on their transitory accounting methods, forward supply contracts, and the numbers and cost of transportation from the source to its destination, he said.

"If they want sympathy and understanding from the public, they have to be more transparent about their finance operations, and not just about their financial instruments," he said.

No such order

Remonde also clarified that Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera never recommended the possible lifting of the order in some areas.

Devanadera was quoted in the newspapers as saying that there "may be a lifting of the freeze order in certain areas such that only specific local government units are covered."

Opposition Sen. Francis Escudero, who is aspiring to run for President, yesterday denounced what he called the "same tactic of oil industry paymasters" threatening the lifting of the oil price freeze.

Escudero said the government must remain steadfast and remove controls in the affected areas only when it sees that the affected communities have recovered well enough from the devastation.

Amend law

"We all know that a surge in fuel prices will be likely when controls are lifted. This will impact on prices of basic commodities and likely lead to high inflation," he said. "We will mean more Filipinos going hungry," he said.

Unresponsive law

Escudero urged Congress to act on proposals to amend or even repeal the Oil Deregulation Law when it resumes sessions on Monday.

"The law has become unresponsive in our minds. It has failed to spur competition and establish a regime of fair prices," he said. With Michael Lim Ubac

Gov't to press peace talks with MILF despite kidnap raps

By Jocelyn Ad

Amy Macapagal-Arroyo's adviser on the peace process, the government peace panel operators on the assumption that the MILF will face it in good faith when negotiations resume before Christmas, as targeted.

Abaya said she was confident that MILF leaders would address the "fractionalization" of their ranks, as implied in reports that "rogue elements" abducted Sinsuat at the Cotabato airport compound in Pagadian City on Oct 31.

"The case of Father Sinsuat is very urgent. We would like to [view the MILF's] offer of assistance [in search efforts] as [a show of] confidence," Abaya said yesterday morning at a forum sponsored by the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap).

Rescue plan

"We always remain open. We need to meet. Otherwise, we're not going to meet," she said. She made it be very careful since we are handling something very fragile," she said.

In Zamboanga City, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said the government had prepared a rescue plan for Sinsuat but that it would be carried out only if the abductors got worse.

"It means that we are doing the police operation in earnest," he said.

Puno added, however, that even with the planned rescue operation, the government was still "open to try to effect the peaceful release" of the 79-year-old missionary.

"There will be no rescue effort immediately unless it becomes absolutely necessary or his physical safety is in peril," he said.

'He's doing his job'

Puno had earlier said members of the MILF 118th Base Command led by Abu Al-Ashrafe had taken Sinsuat.

He also said that as a result, the Philippine National Police and the Crisis Management Committee (CMC) led by Defense Sec. Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and the Cabinet Cluster on Security Affairs headed by Executive Sec. Eduardo Ermita were ready to call off communication with the MILF.

The MILF has denied Puno's accusation, saying Al Ashrafe was actually trying to have Sinsuat freed. It also said Puno's claim was "cheap propaganda" and an affront to the peace process.

Abaya said Puno's statement that Al Ashrafe was

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Rx

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Vol. 24 No. 337

OPINION

Wishful thinking

EVERY TIME PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO makes a performance report on her presidency, she always puts on top of her list the economic reforms she has put in place, like the expanded value-added tax. These measures may not have won her public approval, she would say, but they have pushed the economy to grow at record pace and, more recently, allowed it to avoid the global recession. And then she would repeat her favorite mantra: she would rather be right than popular.

EDITORIAL

In her last year in office, however, Ms Arroyo is acting as if she would rather be popular than right. In the process, she has turned on its head the economic philosophy that used to guide her administration by interfering sparingly with the market.

Facing continuing criticism for the slow response to a series of natural calamities, especially Storm "Ondoy" and Typhoon "Pepeng," the President has sought to put herself on the good side of the Filipino public by ordering oil companies to freeze the prices of their products in the whole of Luzon at the levels prevailing on Oct. 15. Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the President issued Executive Order 839 to protect consumers from profiteering by the oil companies amid the devastation wrought by the typhoons and floods. He warned that the government would use all its powers to ensure compliance with the EO.

Hearing protestations and even dissent, the oil companies reluctantly complied with the EO but asked the administration to reconsider it. But they said that selling at the prescribed prices would result in big losses for them and create supply shortages, and they warned that the policy could jeopardize future investments in the industry.

Various business organizations, local and foreign, chimed in and echoed the warnings about reduction in supplies and disincentive to further investments. They said that the "open-ended nature of this price control... leaves the oil industry and all those who depend on oil products in a state of great uncertainty," and urged the government to set a date for the lifting of the EO.

The government, however, appears determined to keep price controls in place, with the President rejecting an appeal by the oil companies for a dialogue. The administration and its allies said the state of emergency called for the implementation of extraordinary measures and urged the oil companies to take a loss for the time being.

That may be wishful thinking. The more that private companies might be persuaded to give up their profits. Very few businesses would agree to take a loss, and the oil companies are not one of them. So less than two weeks after the EO was handed down, a few gasoline stations have shut down, while some others have reduced the number of pumps in operation.

Are they bluffing or girding for a showdown? The administration's problem is that it cannot even call the bluff, if bluff it is. Not after the government gave up control of Petron, a strategic player in the local oil industry. Sure the government, if it is so insanely inclined, could run the oil companies out of business, like who will run the industry in their place? Who will buy the oil, bring it here and distribute it? In fact, who will sell to such a rogue government?

The irony of it is that the price cap benefits least the people who need help most. Albay Gov. Joey Salceda has pointed out that Filipinos earning P100,000 a year or less used only 28 percent of the total fuel, light and water consumed in 2006 and accounted for just 10 percent of all spending for transportation and communications. This means that the savings from lower fuel prices are enjoyed mainly by the more affluent members of society who own cars and use more of the water and electricity.

A better way to help the disadvantaged sectors, Salceda said, would be to issue direct discounts, which would keep them low; give fuel access cards to lower income groups; and distribute electricity vouchers to the poorer families.

Ms Arroyo has been known to heed the advice of Salceda, her former economics student. The teacher ought to listen to the student again.

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Why presidents go local

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

WHAT IS WRONG WITH PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO's frequent visits to her native town in Pampanga? Nothing... if they are the simple visits they are made out to be by her spokesmen, sentimental trips we all make to the communities of our childhood. Everything—if their purpose is to simply rest a bothersome or pensive for special favors because of its personal or political importance to the incumbent head of state.

Yes, the president of a country is the prerogative of all its citizens. Ms Arroyo's sphere of authority, as president, covers the entire nation, not one town, or province, or region. She is expected to rise above all claims of kinship, ethnic loyalty, and religious affiliations. This is the same principle behind the modern rejection of all forms of particularism (like imperium and regionalism) in government. Indeed, this is the same standard against which all our many presidents are measured.

Yet many people who would offer explanations in our society time he granted that they can use public power for private ends, as long as other people are benefited in the process. Thus, town mayors routinely plan their the improvement of roads that pass through their private landholdings. Congressmen allocate their pork barrel to build roads and bridges that connect their vacation villas to the town proper. Senators use their clout to direct highways in order to raise the property value of their lands. Public works officials use government equipment and manpower to excavate roads that go to the summer cool of a jurisdictive because that is where their properties are.

This practice extends to the appointment of public officials. Although our laws demand that strict rules of eligibility must be universally enforced in the recruitment of individuals for government service, the observance of this rule seems to apply only to relatives. We take it for granted that the appointment of people whose least important asset is that they belong to a president's ethnic group is a prerogative of the appointing power. He uses ethnic affiliation as having the same significance as political party affiliation. This is, of course, hardly surprising in a society in which the political system has been unable to differentiate itself from family, clientelist, religious and business. We saw this in full display during the Marcos regime, when the latter made sure to be found in the finance region, and when one had to be Ilocano to become a top general in the armed forces.

Ms Arroyo's monthly visits to Pampanga in the last few months—in particular to the environs of the second district—not only bring the country back to this dark era of pre-modern regionalism, they also resonate a vicious form of ruthless patronage that has no place in a modern society.

During these local visits, the President brings with her virtually the whole superstructure of government, notably the departments that deal with frontline services—social welfare, public works, health, education, etc. A full-service medical mission usually accompanies her on every visit. She distributes fiat, health cards, scholarships, land titles, and socialization shocks. All hands are tied, however, with red ribbons. With the stroke of a hand, she causes roads, bridges and dikes to be repaired. She orders, improves or inaugurates the installation or upgrading of electric power lines, water systems, irrigation systems. She announces the dredging of local rivers, the construction of classrooms, school facilities, and multi-purpose sheds. It is not hard to believe it when her people use this to a hardworking president. But one has to ask whether she understands the work of a president.

When the President of the nation has to personally attend to the construction of barangay roads and ditches, there is every reason to think that the local officials and the public works agencies have miserably failed in their tasks. When the President has to bring a medical mission into a town, the message is contrary to that the health authorities have failed to do their job. Moreover, the President has practically ceased the construction of barangay classrooms, one must ask what the Department of Education is doing. What does it say of the agencies of government when the President herself has to personally handle the distribution of PhilHealth cards, land titles, and scholarships? Surely, one cannot fault a president who performs a symbolic purpose of inaugurating a barangay classroom in order to kick off a nationwide program to rehabilitate basic education. But Ms. Arroyo's recent patronage forays are not confined to their import but typically also local. There is a motive behind them that we must not discuss here.

It is enough to say—here is a microcosm of everything that is wrong with our country's system of government. Our local communities—and their mayors, governors and other, our governors—have been so stripped of their power and initiative that they can do very little for their constituencies. We have reduced them to mere outposts of a central government, outposts of an imperial authority based in Manila. Instead of being the locus of power, they have become the supplicants in their capitol buildings, who wait for the imperial authority based in Manila. Instead of being the locus of power, they have become the supplicants in their capitol buildings, who wait for the imperial authority to visit their kapitan bonok.

And because we hold periodic elections does not mean we are a modern democracy. In fact, we are not; we are trying to be. Still, our ideas and aspirations are far ahead of the system of governance that surrounds us, in which the majority of our people remain stuck because of their poverty and powerlessness. Elections are bring nothing new unless this system is first overhauled.

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

How the LT bid for GenBank was won

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

TO ILLUSTRATE THE PHONEY/BAY NATURE of Northland Mineral (NM) behavior towards Lucio Tan (LT) and his companies, last week's column cited a letter from LT to PM, asking for the latter's assistance in the former's bid to acquire General Bank and Trust Co. (GenBank, now Allied Bank). The specific assistance requested was for PM to "persuade" the Philippine National Bank (PNB) to remain to issue a P120-million standby letter of credit (L/C) in favor of the Central Bank (CB), to secure the loans and advances made by the CB to GenBank. Sans this commitment letter, the bid would be disqualified.

The request, made on a Saturday (March 26, 1977), was urgent. The deadline for submitting the bids had been set by the CB for Monday (March 28, 1977) at 11 a.m.

PM must have acted immediately, because on Monday, March 28, 1977, Presidential 952, Domingo did sign a letter, signifying the bank's readiness to issue, "at the request of LT et al., the required standby L/C in the sum of P120 million. This, even though the 1976's single-bid worst limit was only P100 million.

As it turns out, this was not the only irregularity that accompanied the acquisition by LT of what was a dead bank. Both PNB and the CB seem to have been backwards to ensure that LT got what he wanted. As documents obtained by Catalino Gonzalez II on the Ombudsman. Yes, the Gonzalez who was sacked out of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), as the believer of the arbitrary generated LT during his job to no avail.

There is a memorandum in the CB governor (Gregorio Licaros). Written on March 29, 1977, and signed by his top lieutenants—Senior Deputy Amado Brion, Deputies Jimmy Laya and Carlos Singson, General Assistant Carlota Tolentino, Assistant Wilhelm Abad-lane, and the director of the DGSD (something to do with bank supervision) Antonio Ortiz—the memo reveals the following:

1. The CB governor's top lieutenants also "respectfully invited" his attention to the rule that "the total amount of the LC to be opened shall not exceed an amount equivalent to 10 (ten percent (10%) of net worth." Well, the P110-million L/C issued by PNB was more than 10 percent of its net worth at the time (P1.7 billion). Laya et al. also pointed out that "the party who applies for the stand-by L/C shall not have any past due obligation with the issuing bank for the 90-day period preceding the date of the issuance of the L/C," and that the stand-by LC should be fully secured, with real estate mortgages and/or CB or national government bonds. Again, these requirements obviously were violated.

PNB broke so many CB rules in accommodating LT, at PM's request. And the CB allowed it. Both not only have backwards, they turned somersaults, inside from the items detailed in the Presidential Security Board (SMS), on July 1, 1977 (Minutes No. 25), or after the expiration of the 90-day period within which to do so, deleted the requirement for PNB to issue the P110 million standby L/C. It also extended LT's repayment period for those CB advances from two years to three years; and, instead of the required real estate mortgages and/or CB and CB bonds as collateral, it chose to accept the tobacco leaf inventory of Fortune Tobacco.

Did LT manage to get CB and PNB to jump through the hoops on his own? If we are talking about today, the answer would be no. The mantra of the Philippine billionaires and their packet is legend: Ten to 1977, LT was definitely not one of the big boys. He needed PM...and PM obliged. Even at the height (or depth) of our international debt crisis, when the government was scrounging around for foreign exchange reserves, PM obliged, diverting the CB to deposit 30 million pesetas dollars in Allied Bank (not could pay to international creditors.

Because he loved LT? Or because he owned LT?

Poverty's the same after 26 years

THE 14th SEPTEMBER 2009 SURVEY FINDING that 33 percent of Filipino households call themselves multitrap (poor), released this week, indicates that there has been practically no progress in the fight against poverty in the last 26 years.

The new poverty reading is from the 87th in a series of national surveys that started in April 1983, when the self-rating method was first applied nationwide by the Development Academy of the Philippines. The original survey found 31 percent of households calling their families poor. The starting point of 31 and the latest point 26 are statistically the same.

Poverty history is revealed by rapid poverty monitoring. Although it is back where it started, poverty did not stand still in the intervening 26 years. The survey went down, then on figuring, flat for just 1983, found self-rated poverty at 34 percent, its all-time record high.

Thereafter, the following poverty episodes, all statistically significant, are visible in the SWS surveys (just only since 1992): the trend in the percentage of Self-Rated Poor (SRP) was downward from 1985 to only 43 percent in early 1987; upward to 50 percent in early 1989; 39 percent; downward to 36 percent in 1990; 45 percent; flat till mid-2001; downward till mid-2004 to 46 percent; upward till mid-2006, at 59 percent; and downward till the end of 2007, to 46 percent again. It spiked up in 2008, to 59 per cent again; and, most recently, settled down to 53 percent in December 2009.

That, the SRP has followed the 40s at best, unfortunately, is also only stated there briefly, so far. Most often, the percentage is in the 50s, as it is now, which means merely returning to its beginning in 1983. Poverty is rather bad when the SRP reaches the 50s, which has happened to late 1987, and is terrible when the SRP hits 70 per cent or more, which last happened in 1994.

It is only because of the rapid and frequent measurements that we have the luxury of these historical fluctuations. The tracking of general poverty, local poverty, the people's poverty thresholds, and hunger by the self-rating approach is inexpensive since it requires addressing only a handful of survey questions to the household head. Such research is at the vanguard of the gradually growing acceptance, in global professional circles, of indicators of subjective well-being as a valid means of tracking meaningful social progress.

The alternatives to Philippine poverty cannot be explained by the rate of economic growth per capita, since the latter has almost always been positive, just rather smooth. The more likely culprit is inflation. The periodic spikes of inflation immediately cause immense suffering to the poor, from which it takes a great effort for them to recover.

What the Filipino poor really need is not mere economic growth (which actually hasn't been of much benefit to them), but consistent price stability and upward flexibility of wages. Economic growth can hardly trickle down to the poor when the purchasing power of wages is going down.

Official poverty statistics are scant and hence misleading. On the other hand, the dynamics of poverty cannot be seen by those who rely only on the scanty official poverty statistics. These are derived by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB), by applying to official poverty line in the family income and expenditure surveys (FIES). The super-expensive FIES, with a very long questionnaire, is done only every three years, details, and a huge sample size because it aims to produce statistics for every province, a done only once every three years.

SOCIAL CLIMATE

Mahar Mangahas

So far, the FIES has been conducted only eight times, namely in 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003 and 2006. The NSCB computations of the percentage of households below its poverty line showed steady declines over the first seven FIES rounds, and gave the misleading impression, up to 2003, that the country's steady economic growth was smoothly reducing the problem of poverty.

However, in early 2009, the NSCB reported that poverty had increased between 2003 and 2006. It was the single official admission that poverty ever got worse, conspicuous to the NSCB for nothing is in numbers. Lately, however, official, done opinions of poverty have been entering the 2000's (later, and turned) have been comparing the 2006 and point (favorable with some earlier starting point like 1991, this is above intellectual dishonesty.)

The finding of worsening poverty over the last two FIES rounds was revealed only in early 2008. Thus, for the next official FIES of 2009, the official reading of poverty might be revealed only in early 2011, i.e., not until the next administration is in place. Does it look like the government's problem has high governance priority?

SWS will report the effect of the recent floods soon. The Third Quarter SWS survey was done last September 18-21, or about a week before storm "Ondoy" seriously flooded Metro Manila and many areas in Luzon, and therefore did not reflect the suffering it caused.

Early soon, however, SWS will be able to report on the public about the effects of Ondoy and subsequent storms on poverty and hunger, since it has used the self-rating questionnaire items in a special non-political survey fielded some days ago, and will being processed. This is separate from the regular SWS Fourth Quarter survey, to be fielded in December and reported to the public early next year.

Contact SWS: www.sws.org.ph or mahar.mangahas@sws.org.ph.

When dots connect

"THEY WILL CONNECT." I ADMIRE ART. I SOUND CONNOISSEUR-ESQUE, even—as though I could really be surprised if they don't.

The young ones have heard this from me more than once. And last not often, I sense, as some of them repeat the phrase just so I am about to dish out the familiar four words. It is a piece of wisdom I have taken the liberty of using to illustrate that though the path

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the country's youngest and bolder. — Ed.

[illegible] straight, nine hand right will tell you there's once a connect of path nonetheless.

I am a storyteller; I see stories in dots: a point. I am a trained monitor that may a bucket full of anecdotes just examples for anyone ready to listen. I am a teller of others' stories (more than my own) which I have adapted, understood and delivered as a way of imparting what wisdom [illegible] may have given me. My listeners take the wisdom well, as any holistic patient would drops of medicine.

It was a little over a month ago when I had a taste of my own medicine. That it was my prophecy fulfilled, the dots connected without my ever noticing they were doing so.

To understand this story, it is best I start from a point 16 years ago. I am in my grade school classroom. It was the second grade, and I was eight years old, sitting among my classmates. Our assigned teacher, the mother of a Japanese classmate, has come with her square pieces of paper wrapped in a silky pouch. She comes weekly on a voluntary basis to garner study share her love for the craft. Today we are making origami cameras, she announces in broken English. I am intrigued, observing and folding, imagining and smiling. At that moment, I thought what fun this lady must have made.

Granted, I was a still a kid then and this thought was as raw as it could be, but the thought stayed with me, refined by years and age. I kept that image to myself, the one of my grown-up wish kids all around me.

The story takes on its next leap in my high school summers, yellow and disoriented. "Are are lunch your academic taking an aptitude test for college that would determine my profession. The questions are a like today (I don't recall what was asked; I do, however, recall what was revealed). The guidance counselor discusses the results and hands out a paper that summarizes what the numbers were in it. My mother professor has no need to see it, further proving that the actual test will tell perhaps never be ready for my staying skills, or lack thereof. Business and teaching have scored the highest.

The summer after high school, my parents approach me about picking a specific course. I feign hesitation at the thought, and instead spend the summer in the company of friends.

How the tide turns. A few years later, I thrive in the corporate world: my career aptitude test must have been right; and, in search of added activity, I voluntarily seek out a public speaking organization. I fall in love with the thought of delivering speeches, and the rush it gives me. I find a thrill in the activity which is far more than my confidence-boosting to challenge myself beyond declamation and memorization, into the world of impromptu speaking. I throw myself into competitions, young as I am compared to the other competitors. In the midst of contest, I make it a personal mission to instill good communications in the world. Or at least those that would listen to what I have to say.

Kids. Teaching. Speech. They are dots to my life that have little to do with each other, save for my passion for each of them.

They might as well have remained dots if not for a serendipitous meeting I had a month ago. A friend led me to a school which led me to a meeting which led to the next. I have kept my day job (don't quit your day job, they say) and I have connected the dots. Every Saturday for the past few weeks, I have been teaching speech and drama classes to kids.

I wish I could tell you that I knew all along that it would come to this genius. I wish I could tell you with confidence—certainty even—that it would. But I have just never had that much faith in the phrase until it had happened to me. Life is funny that way; it sneakes you by surprise at the most opportune and humbling moment. Perhaps I enjoyed my classes as a kid, leading me to love teaching, and consequently finding my strengths as a communicator and then nothing is dots or wisdom. Full circle? There you go.

The other day I conducted a speech class for a group of seven-year olds. I had the brilliant idea of letting them talk about imaginary places they would take of their friends. "Going what, Teacher Carmel," they asked curiously.

I brought out a piece of square paper and began to teach them how to make origami cameras.

Carmel Valencia, 26, works for a beauty company and is taking life one dot at a time.

Quality education: just a campaign promise?

FILIPINO VOTERS INVARIABLY HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL the last hour of the last day for the filing of Certificate of Candidacy to know who want to be the next Philippine president. Be that as it may, it is already open season for the elections even if the Commission on Elections says the campaign period is yet to begin some Feb. 9, 2010. This early, the elections—just to clarify the first time voters—is obviously being foreshadowed with a variety of campaign messages through every available media platform.

For instance, in his most recent TV spot featuring practically every topcelebrity endorser to the country, Sen. Noynoy Aquino calls on us to join him in restoring the people power spirit for a more democratic Philippines. Sen. Manny Villar, on the other hand, wants us to know that the keys to success are hard work and persistence, a message he brings to us through several brightly lit, colorful print and TV commercials with an evidently youthful vibe.

As of this writing, we don't know yet if Sen. Chiz Escudero's reason to throw his hat in the ring, but his TV ads promise us that we will see the dawn of a new day. Then, there's Sen. Gordon, Sen. Debbie Receiving and National Disaster Coordinating Council Chair Gilbert Teodoro, who would like us convince us through the media that he has what it takes to lead the country intelligently and competently. Oh, and let's not forget MMDA Chairman Bayani Fernando and Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane, who both have taken rather unorthodox approaches to capture the attention of the young public.

Each campaign message is crafted differently, but all have the same goal: to get us to decide this [illegible] in the name of our presidential hopeful in lieu of the others. (The 2010 elections are going to be automated, right?)

The Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP) maintains that the events that led to Edsa I underscored the fact that the electoral process is the most basic democratic exercise there is. You can tamper with it all you want—and maybe get away with it for a time as Marcos did—but ultimately and always, the people's voice will make itself heard.

On the other hand, the events that led to Edsa II teaches us a bitter lesson, in the words of the late Haydee Yorac, "we have to value our votes." Joseph Estrada won the presidency because our people no longer understood what elections are for, "votes once sold are."

It is very crucial to make an informed choice come election day. The commercialism wantonness and the campaign organizations of the candidates are so sophisticated that they can easily blindside the unsuspecting voter. That is why we have to use every means we have to ask the candidates how they stand on issues that are important to us.

Since the FWWPP advocates education to form, I would like to hear how the presidential aspirants would respond to the following questions:

1. What is your understanding of "education quality"?

2. Republic Act 9155 says, "It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality basic education and to make such education accessible to all by providing all Filipino children a free and compulsory education in the elementary level and free education in the high school level." The same law also gives the Department of Education the "authority, accountability and responsibility for ensuring access to, promoting equity in, and improving the quality of basic education." However, the DepEd is also the country's biggest bureaucracy and as such is prone to all kinds of political pressures. As the country's chief executive, how would you ensure that the DepEd does not get hamstrung by such political pressures?

3. Our teachers are perhaps the most overworked civil servants in this country. Dr. Orlando Quijano, the government-run education, once commented that he knows of no profession where as little is given, yet so much is asked. Inasmuch as teachers cannot like the PNSTA have made it known that they want higher salaries and better working conditions. Given that education is usually the first to get the biggest chunk of the national budget, how would you address the unions' demands?

4. Countries with high performing education systems invariably have a mechanism that integrates community supervision into education policy. There are in many forms, but all have the common means of ensuring that schools' policymakers are answerable for student achievement. What are your thoughts on this matter?

5. Recently, US First Lady Michelle Obama wrote that "We all remember the impact a special teacher had on us—a teacher who refused to let us fall through the cracks, who pushed us and believed in us when we doubted ourselves, who sparked in us a lifelong curiosity and passion for learning. The single most important factor affecting students' achievement is the caliber of their teachers." There are reports that we have been steadily losing our best teachers to job offers abroad. How would you address this issue?

In case any of you presidential candidates is reading this, I invite you to send in your response as to my e-mail below.

Butch Hernandez (butchhernandez.ds@gmail.com) is the executive director of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power.

Cory's style of leadership

UNKNOWN TO MANY, THE LATE CORAZON Aquino was cited, in a book, as an example of extraordinary leadership by a European expert on leadership. She was in a short list of outstanding leaders that included Pope John Paul II, Ronald Reagan, Lech Walesa, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Robert Schuman and Francois Mitterand. The author of the book is Alexander Haraud, who is the Director of the European Center for Leadership Development (www.eald.org) and resides in Brussels.

Haraud quotes Cory Aquino on collegiality in decision-making in politics: "The ability to work well with others, to listen to different points of view, to credit each views with a sincerity equal to one's own, and to have the flexibility to accommodate the valid concerns of others: this is an important quality for anyone who wishes to serve the people. It is an expression of the spirit of service. Indeed, how can anyone claim to have a genuine spirit of solidarity with the people in general, if he is incapable of an operational solidarity with those he must work with closely?"

These words of the late president of the Philippines struck a strong chord in me because I strongly believe in collegiate government. In every organization I have worked for as part of the management team, I have always tried to foster collegiality in decision-making. As Harold writes, collegiality is the virtue of prudence in action: five people working together see farther and more deeply than one person working alone. It is also a manifestation of the humility of the leader who is aware of his own limitations and desires to entrust his colleagues by developing in each of them a sense of freedom and a sense of personal responsibility. All members of the team equipment team participate in making decisions.

BUSINESS MATTERS

Dr. Bernardo M. Villegas

Collegiality is the virtue of prudence in action: five people working together see farther and more deeply than one person working alone

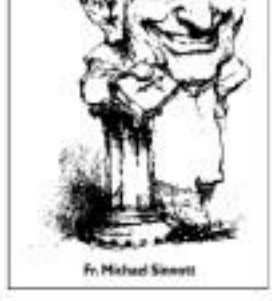
Collegial government is very much part of what is known as Management by Mission as developed by IESE Business School professor Pablo Cardona. The leader becomes the animator of the management team on the mission of the organization. He is a servant of his team, as a collective, and of each one of its members, as individuals. He does everything in his power to deepen the commitment of the team members to their shared mission. He does not demand personal loyalty. He motivates everyone to own the corporate mission.

It does take humility on the part of the leader to truly practice collegial government because he must be ready to renounce his judgmental (rather principles are at stake) when the group decides against his position. The test of his humility is even greater in the event the group does not listen to dissent. The leader does not say "I told you so. This wouldn't have happened if you had listened to me." He participates enthusiastically in the implementation of all decisions and shares joint material responsibility for them with his colleagues.

What collegial government entails is decision-deep, which always stems from pride. The decisorial manager thinks wrongly that he is master of all he surveys. He overestimates his positional and moral capabilities and undercuts motivation of others. He is hard to deal with because he is overassertive and tends to intimidate others. One man rule is inefficient and ineffective: no matter how nothing of the art of governance and fail to develop a sense of freedom and responsibility. Those who are seriously considering for Service Aquino to be the next President of the Philippines should make sure that he has learned the collegial style of government Sembcha has mastered.

Dr. Bernardo M. Villegas is senior vice president of the University of Asia and the Pacific. For comments, his email address is bmvillegas@uap.edu.ph.

IN THE NEWS



Fr. Michael Sinnott

Of course, it's a contest between good and evil

LETTERS

THERE IS GOOD AND EVIL.

How can anyone say that the 2010 presidential contest is not between good and evil? Good and evil being the highest and ultimate contradiction permeates every aspect of humanity. The constant conflict between the two must be resolved unless a massive social, political, economic, even other issue in any aspect of human living.

In fact, deeds renders motives all other issues in a pointer—like whether the person was poor or rich or corruption in a corporation. Then, it is only the issue on "good and evil" that matters.

Hebrews 9:27 says: "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment."

Our democratic system is bleeding profusely from wounds inflicted by immorality as it see the hard institution has weighed down on the governance of President Macapagal-Arroyo all these years, compelling her to cower in shame while dragging instruments down the drains! The people have lost trust in Congress, the Constitution, the judiciary, the Commission on Elections, the Department of Justice, etc. The bleeding must be stopped before any real transition can proceed. Any good long term political vision may come to too late at the death of our democracy.

We have reasons to fear another nightmare in our political history: a president in hot on-going all-out war, in almost how many just to may reconnect, may is the case of assuming the proclamation of an administrative bid.

—PABLO BASILIO SANTOS
3080 E. Rosas St., Caloocan City

PHRC's Emergency Response Unit: Better prepared than government to respond to calamities

Hail Red Cross' rescue teams and volunteers

THE DEDICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), citing the preparedness of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) in the rescue and relief efforts during Storm "Ondoy" and Typhoon "Pepeng," couldn't have been more correct. (Inquirer, 11/3/09)

During the rescue and relief efforts in Sept. to Sept. 26, the day that "Ondoy" dumped record levels of rain, it was the PNRC that responded ahead of the government.

The government was not really visible until several hours had already passed and the television coverage of the relief efforts was being done mostly by others.

The PNRC, chaired by Sen. Richard Gordon, along with the Subic and Olongapo rescue units which Gordon formed—both his "infrastructure campaign," were among the first to respond to the crisis. But these groups never really got the publicity and media did not really give them attention.

We, their immediate response to the crisis was welcomed by and heroism in action, and I admire their efforts to save and give relief to the unknown victims even without the spotlight on them.

—MICHAEL LACSTON,
Rm. 218, National Press Club Building,
Intramuros, Manila

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Day of reckoning for gov't negligence

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CANNOT AFFORD to be negligent and overlook some of the functions or responsibilities of their offices, simply because a time of reckoning always comes. Thus, the president, Cabinet secretaries, governors, mayors and the rest of officialdom should draw up comprehensive and detailed lists of their mandated functions, the disciplinary measures, and the natural and man-made disasters that could test their respective areas of responsibilities.

For example, the president should order the local government secretary to require governors, mayors, and barangay officials to conduct a survey to identify areas susceptible to natural or man-made disasters—like floods, landslides, fire, sabotage, epidemic, etc—in each of our 41,000 barangays. The lists are needed for planning purposes, but formal training and preparations in leading, directing and managing physical rescue and timelines, for checking preparedness against calamities, and for monitoring government performance vs goals.

In the preparation, review and legislation of the national annual budget, both executive and legislative officials must follow a proper hierarchy of needs in the budgeting and spending of scarce government funds. Utmost priority must be given to the protection of human lives against natural and man-made calamities, next to public safety, progress and prosperity, then the delivery of vital public services (e.g., medical and health, education, poverty alleviation, irrigation, roads and bridges). Expenditures that are not absolutely necessary in the lives of the people, like entertainment or agrarian reform, must be given the lowest priority.

The highly wasteful allocation of public funds continuing from the failure to follow this hierarchy of needs is monumentally exemplified by the 220-MM deal, which would have pushed through had it not been exposed. The government had already contracted to spend a whopping ₱328 million for that contract, which, even without the alleged gross overprice, was very expensive primarily because the contract was to link up 42,000 barangays, municipalities, etc., despite the fact that we already have good-enough alternative means of communication (e.g., cell phones) in some 1,300 towns and cities.

In stark contrast, the government has not bothered to plan and spend for the most basic need—provision of human lives against recurring natural calamities nationwide.

Thus, when an inevitable reckoning comes—"Ondoy" the government could not hide behind its negligence. The same goes for governors—which committed earlier to spend the staggering amount of ₱229 million, or P11.5 billion as the ZTE contract (which was not even about a matter of life and death for Filipinos)—was exposed as having failed to spend even a measly P1 million for 1,000 evacuation to be used during killer floods.

—MARCELO L. TUCOSO,
marcelotucoso@yahoo.com

Obscene billboards

I WOULD LIKE TO CALL THE ATTENTION of company owners and advertising agencies to the kind of ad they make to sell their products. Our highways are full of brand and shower pictures constructing daily the eyes and minds of people. I understand their need for profit but they don't have to go to that extreme. We have clean and wholesome billboards, not an atmosphere full of hateful suggestions. Have some love and responsibility.

—JOSEPHINE GARCIA,
josemia@yahoo.com.ph

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Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

Child prostitution in Boracay probed

Laguna town's flooding woes prolonged by 'Santi,' rains

A PILE of relief goods awaits residents of Pila, Laguna, who now suffer from what seems to be an endless episode of flooding. CLARISSA DAVID AND MARIANNE ELIZABETH LUCAS

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—Whatever hopes that residents of Pila, Laguna had that flooding in their town would soon ease were dashed when Tropical Storm "Santi" and two days of rains after that brought floodwaters back to levels when Tropical Storm "Ondoy" struck.

Five of the town's villages near Laguna Lake are now under chest and neck-deep flood while floodwater in other villages were starting to subside. But Santi and the rains aren't to blame.

Houses that are at least a kilometer away from the lake are under water.

"We are expecting this to all after Christmas," said the town's mayor, Wilfredo Dizon.

Strong winds brought by Santi also created storm surges that inundated more houses and destroyed those that were left standing by Ondoy.

Santi destroyed 259 houses and damaged 369 others in Pila, a fourth-class municipality also relies on farming and fishing.

Mayor Dizon said at least 93 percent of the town's rice fields were had been destroyed while 200 hectares of farms are now pools of water.

The loss of livelihood is the town's biggest problem, said the mayor.

Ernie Habana, a 45-year-old rice farmer, has been relying on farming as her family's only source of income for 21 years.

A tomato, she was in harvest rice by the end of September when Ondoy struck.

She normally harvests 200 cavans, but after Ondoy, the harvest came up to only 45 cavans, earning for her not more than P8,000 out of an P18,000 investment.

Surveillance Cherry Ilit, fisherman, now survives on P80 to P100 per day fishing when the weather permits after Ondoy and Santi destroyed all his fishcages. —Gloriz Cobing-Pelayo and Sandi Rodriguez, Inquirer Southern Luzon

By Hector P. Bürgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

KORO CITY—THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in Western Visayas has launched an investigation of alleged cases of child prostitution in establishments on Boracay Island.

Aida Bautista, labor regional director, said in an e-mailed statement that the labor department sent a team of inspectors to the island resort to verify a report that at least five establishments were allowing child prostitution.

The report came from the local government organization Ilaid Child Protection Chain Management and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (Cepat-Philippines).

Two labor inspectors from the DOLE office in Aklan investigated the five establishments, which were identified in the Cepat report as tolerating child prostitution.

The inspectors, however, did not find minors or children employed in the establishments during the time of inspection on Oct. 28 and 29, Bautista said in his statement.

Bautista said the agency would conduct regular seminars and meetings with asylum agencies to help eliminate risks of children being lured into prostitution in Boracay.

In a 2006 study, Cepat said girls and boys aged 14-17 years old engage in prostitution in Boracay.

In a 46-page report last year, Cepat released findings that included accounts of children who fell prey to prostitution in Boracay.

The Cepat report said the sexual exploitation of children in Boracay has been made easy through tour packages, which were accessible to tourists interested to sex exhibitionism.

"While it is a fact that tourists in Boracay has obviously brought in money for the government, it, too, has its social costs," part of the report said.

"Boracay attracts not just responsible tourists who compose the majority, but also visitors whose purpose in travel is to exploit and engage in sexual activities involving children. This situation, in turn, makes other children in Boracay highly at risk that everyone in the island," part of the report's conclusion read.

Cepat said in its report that there was a lack of support services to victims, especially trained social workers that could handle children victims are victims of sexual exploitation.

It said there was also a need to deepen the knowledge and skills on laws and policies related to children to help and protect children from abuse and sexual exploitation.

"In most instances children are seen as collaborators, thus, in practical terms, they are not seen as victims of sexual exploitation," according to the report.

The group said some tourism establishments, including resorts and hotels, "help facilitate the sexual exploitation of children."

NEWSBRIEFS

■ CEBU CITY

Ex-mayor nabbed for graft

A former Cebu town mayor convicted of graft eight years ago was arrested on Wednesday on a shopping mall here.

The National Bureau of Investigation arrested Silver Neigue, former mayor of Compostela town, eight years after he was convicted by the Sandiganbayan of failing to account for more than P370,000 in advances he made from the town's funds.

Neigue was convicted on Oct. 9, 2001 with Dominador Maravilla, then municipal treasurer. They were sentenced to life in prison and perpetually barred from holding public office. —Doreen Rosalejos, Inquirer Visayas

■ BACOLOD CITY

Deranged man triggers outage

A DERANGED man triggered a three-hour outage in Bacolod City Wednesday night after he climbed a 64-foot steel transmission tower and touched live wires, knocking out a high-voltage transformer of the Negros Occidental Electric Cooperative (Noreco) II in Barangay Estefania here.

Roel Vanes, Noreco spokesman, said the still unidentified man's electrocution of the transformer caused a power shutdown.

The man was taken to the Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Regional Hospital emergency room but before he could be treated, he ran to a bathroom in the hospital where he poured water into his body while screaming, police station 6 PO2 said.

The man walked out of the hospital, jumped over a fence and headed to another hospital in Barangay Estefania where he was later found.

Police captured the man and brought him back to the hospital. There was minimal damage to the transformer. —Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

■ DAGUPAN CITY

Collect trash, mayor orders

A PILE of garbage lies uncollected in a Dagupan City street corner. It has become a familiar scene throughout the city. —RODERICK BONIFACIO

WITH CHRISTMAS fast approaching, Mayor Ramon Guico III on Thursday ordered government workers to work overtime and collect trash left piling up for weeks in various corners and in village bins.

He described the trash to be stored temporarily at the city's dental clinic in Barangay Mayombo and the government gets funds to take them to a landfill in Capas, Tarlac.

Once the streets are cleared for the Christmas season, Guico promised a compelling Western hospital downtown Dagupan into a "green lane." —Manuel Cabrera, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Vegetable prices up as supply normalizes

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Unlimited by reports than has posted vegetables find begun to flood the market, leading to the vegetable trading post here remained. Intuit as prices started to rise.

The trend was noticed before All Saints' Day and as of Thursday, prices of highland vegetables continued to peak, a sign of relief for farmers who were recovering from losses caused by Typhoon "Pepeng" last month.

Elsie Chi-it, Cordillera Vegetable Trading Post Vendors Association president, said demand for fresh vegetables remained low but her council's optimism toward supply.

She said the lull in trading pushed demand up.

Aquino, consolidated-bec-ose of the subsequent vegetables here, is sold for P45-P48 from P38 per kg, the business learned.

"Japan is now the province's green gold," Chi-it said.

Chi-it said supply has become the gauge for prices. "Once the price of supply increases, prices of other vegetables would increase too," she said.

True enough, prices of other vegetables were up: Potatoes sell for P30 to P45 a kg, cabbage, P50 to P60 a kg (from P38 to P45); lettuce, P120 a kg (from P60). Delmer Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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E-mail at: [illegible]
Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

ARCHBISHOP Jose Palma of Palo (standing last row, wearing the white liturgical headdress called mitre and holding the ceremonial staff called crozier) leads the priests from the Archdiocese of Palo and the Dioceses of Borongan, Naval and Calbayog during the retreat-seminar on spiritual direction, deliverance ministry and exorcism held in Ormoc City.

Leyte-Samar priests learn about exorcism

By Cyrah Cabanlas
Borongan, Eastern Samar

THE DEVIL IS NOT ABOUT TO change his evil ways. He resumes hand at work and makes his vile presence felt through people he possesses.

This prompted Fr. Arnulfo Medrano, 66, parochial vicar of the Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception parish in Ormoc town to fraternity funnel, to attend a seminar two last month on deliverance ministry and exorcism.

It was his first time to take part in such a seminar in his more than 30 years of ministry to the Diocese of Borongan.

"I have never seen the devil face to face, but I have encountered and combated his minions a number of times. They are persons, even if they do not have horns or tails," Medrano says.

The need to concretely battle with the devil was also the reason Borongan Bishop Crispin B. Varquez brought a team of priests to the seminar on spiritual direction, deliverance ministry and exorcism in Ormoc City in Leyte last week.

The seminar was initiated and sponsored by the Alliance of the Holy Family Incorporated (AHFI) and attended by the clergy of Calbayog, Borongan, Naval and Palo areas.

Old as Christianity

According to AHFI spiritual director Fr. Edgardo Arellano, the practice of exorcism is as old as Christianity itself and even predates it, and the Church teaches that the Devil is real and evil spirits exist.

Arellano, however, laments the fact that the Catholic Church is largely seen about it these days.

He cites the influence of "modern theologians" and those with a liberal mind-set who have adopted Rudolf Bultmann's influence as they have accepted psychological and psychiatric explanations of a person's abnormal behavior.

"If you speak about the Devil, you lose your credibility and you scare people. Even some members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) say this is just fanaticism, a hoax," Arellano says.

"The greatest influence of the Devil is to convince even bishops and priests that he no longer exists," he says.

Arellano says the result of "Freudstein," who are fixated only on the love of God, as well as the claim of "Objective Realists," who focus only on the modern era and consider evil and exorcism as irrelevant pose a great challenge.

"How can you talk only about God's love in the midst of corruption and violence? The Bible has numerous passages about Christ expelling demons and being tempted by the Devil. The battle against the Devil is central to His mission. In fact, the Devil's influence was already seen in Adam and Eve," he says.

Our Father

Arellano cites the "Our Father" as a classic example of prayer of deliverance from evil. He quotes 1 Peter 5:8, where the Devil is portrayed as prowling like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

"It dawns about the Devil's existence is not obsolete because even the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Gaudium et Spes P. 2 talks about Christians and human families under the triangle hold of a personified evil," he says.

Before Vatican II, exorcism was a ritual service, a prerequisite before ordination to priesthood. The Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith tackles Christian Faith and Demonology.

In 1999, the Vatican issued a revised Catholic rite of exorcism for the first time since 1614, essentially reaffirming that human.

Recently, Pope Benedict XVI added exorcism as one of the courses in one of the seminaries in Rome. His predecessor, John Paul II is said to have exorcised a woman at the St. Peter's Square once.

According to Fr. Francis Tupaz, provincial of the Oblate Apostles of the Two Hearts, Satan is at work through diabolical possession, oppression, obsession, subjugation and infestation.

The signs that a person is possessed is when he or she speaks other languages, exhibits extraordinary strength, knows about hidden or secret things, and seems to say/sing surreal.

Exorcism office

Tupaz says that only the archdiocese of Manila and Palo, and the Diocese of San Pedro in Laguna have exorcism offices. Manila has registered at least 186 cases of exorcisms, while San Pablo has a case almost every week, he says.

Fr. Bernard Alpha of Borongan says he once witnessed an exorcism, but the case simply involved the paranoia of a deranged victim on the family set-up.

Arellano points out that Canon Law strictly requires the permission of a bishop and the presence of a psychiatrist before a real possession is pronounced.

The Nine Rule of the Revised Catholic rite of Exorcism calls for a Church-approved exorcist to consult modern medicine and rule out the possibility of a mental and psychological disorder.

A practical advice is never to touch the person being exorcised lest one is accused of harassment. Minors should have their parents' consent, and a doctor and a policeman must be present.

A video recorder is also a welcome gadget.

Arellano says that while there are bad spirits or preternatural demons, there are also natural demons or human forms.

"Humans who violate God's will and work of self-love are demons in human form. We are not fighting flesh and blood but principalities of darkness," he says.

"When people persist to live in its and refuse the truth there are signs that Satan exists: abortion, reproductive health bill, divorce, euthanasia and same-sex marriage. When people deliberately refuse the Gospel, when love is subordinated to egotism, First World countries hoard all the power and resources at the expense of Third World countries, nefarious plots of the Bilderberg group, the Liberal Treaty establishing the European Communities, the Agenda 21 or depopulation program of the UN, the Codex Alimentarius or the propagation of GM foods, the Freemasons, Rothschild and Rockefeller trying to establish a new world order."

Arellano says he strong statements objective people to walk out. However, he says he has documents and even films in hand as his claims.

One must remain in a state of grace, refrain sin, do sacrifices, confess regularly, observe a communion of reparation, consecrate oneself to the hearts of Jesus and Mary, and perform good works to be able to defeat the Devil, he says.

The author is the former rector of the Society of Our Lady of College Seminary in Borongan, Eastern Samar and the former head of Communications and Mass Media of the Diocese of Borongan.

MAKE UP FOR EVER
Celebrates 25 Years of Beauty, Fashion, and Artistry
with a Face and Body Painting Runway Show

As Make Up For Ever celebrates its 25 years in Paris and around the world this year, Beo One Commercial Corporation, its exclusive distributor in the Philippines, commemorated the special occasion with a lavish and lively painting-runway show done with typical French flair. The show featuring the art of face and body painting, a part of the European artistic tradition, is a first in the Philippines. Face and Body Painting is an artistic approach in which the face and body becomes a living, three-dimensional canvas. This approach to art was made popular in Paris and Europe by Dany Dano (creator of MAKE UP FOR EVER), who believes that the body is the most beautiful canvas.

Icons of beauty, fashion, and the arts Heart Evangelista, Isabel Daza, and Raymond Gutierrez joined Bolero Heussaff in greeting Make Up For Ever a happy birthday by blowing the singular red candle on the grand cake decked in the Make Up For Ever collage of works by Dany Sanz over the past 25 years. Toasting to the momentous occasion were Beo One Commercial Corporation's Managing Director, Diana Abaloz-Lorenzo, Creative Director, Mo Abaloz-Aragones, Director for Press Relations and Publicity, Celine Gabriel, and Marketing Manager, the vibrant Donna Rae Viola Andrada.

The Runway Show

The featured works of art placed the spotlight on the grandeur of nature—its majestic beauty and its awesome power. This theme was meant to inspire the audience to honor the Earth — a tribute to the cause of preservation and conservation. The extraordinary art exhibit bent to life in a myriad of light, color, texture, and motion depicting a variety of scenes from the ocean, the mountains, the jungles, and the sky. Manila's most fashionable held their breath as six creatures de l'air were presented one by one. The show opened with Yuki Genebra's Ocean's Story, a captivating display of detail, motion, form, and texture. The crowd was awed by Joyce Pieton's fierce and fabulous Empress of the Wild and enamored with Regie Escolin-Soriano's Butterfly Mystique. The stunning Serpentine by River Dulias impressed the audience, while Pinky Flores-Alcantara's Velvet Leaf and Clara Lua's erratic Midnight Spring inspired applause. Bolero Heussaff's sultry and elegant Peacock Queen brought about gasps from the audience. Unrivaled creative artistry and the best body painting products were matched to create a show that resulted in admiration, accolades, and high spirits that did not cease till the wee hours.

The Celebration

Amber Ultra Lounge at Fort Bonifacio Global City was transformed into a unique venue for art appreciation and merriment as the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Preview Magazine, Look Magazine, Stylebible.ph, Uno Magazine, Diwa, Bannerstone, Rene Salviejo, and Bazaar joined friends and family of MAKE UP FOR EVER in celebrating the special birthdays as Ellen Hidalgo's of Music and Wine Radio kept the party vibrant with deep house music. Photographers Will Nicolasora and Raymond Lemoso of Spectre Images as well as John Rubillo, Jigger Avanceña, and Jung Sevilla captured the awesome yet fleeting works of art. The show was orchestrated by Fabric under the expert supervision of the lovely Cacay Moras.

Muslims in US fear witch-hunt after Fort Hood shooting

AN ORDINARY DAY A frame grab from a security video provided by CNN shows Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan in a convenience store in Killeen, Texas, early Thursday morning. AFP

WASHINGTON—US Muslim groups feared themselves for a public backlash against the faith on Thursday (Friday in Manila) after an Army psychiatrist identified as an American Muslim killed 12 people at a military base in Texas.

Soon after Pentagon officials named the shooter in the Fort Hood facility as Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, groups rallied to condemn an act US President Barack Obama had earlier described as a "horrific outburst of violence."

"The guy's name is a Muslim name," Ibrahim Hooper of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said, expressing fears about damage to interfaith relations, already strained by the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In a statement, CAIR condemned the shootings as a "cowardly attack," adding that "no political or religious ideology could ever justify or excuse such wanton and indiscriminate violence."

"American Muslims stand with our fellow citizens in offering both prayers for the victims and sincere condolences to the families of those killed or injured," the statement said.

Qaseem Ali Uqdah, who was a Marine for 22 years before becoming the executive director at American Muslims Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Council, now hosts a "witch-hunt" like that which followed Sept. 11, 2001.

Nothing to do with religion

"This is a criminal act and we have to treat it like a criminal act, not something to do with religion" he said.

Of the estimated 3,500 Muslims in the US Armed Forces, Uqdah said there could be some fallout from the attack.

"What we don't need is people discourage uniting to fight [in Afghanistan or Iraq] questioning if you are a Christian, if you are a Muslim or if you are a Jew ... that is one [else we need as a nation.

"We need to fight the war on terror together," he said.

In a Pew survey published last September, 58 percent of respondents said that Islam encouraged violence more than other religions.

Fifty-eight percent said there was a lot of discrimination against Muslims in the United States. AFP

US Army shrink turns psycho, kills 12 in Texas rampage

Frances Mangosing
Philippine Daily Inquirer

President Barack Obama called the shooting at the Fort Hood military base in Killeen, Texas, where soldiers who are about to be deployed to Afghanistan undergo training and medical screening, "a horrific outburst of violence."

"It's difficult enough when we lose these brave Americans in battles overseas," the commander-in-chief said. "It is horrifying that they should come under fire at an Army base on American soil."

Further bloodshed was narrowly prevented when the gunman was blocked from reaching a graduation ceremony attended by some 800 people, just minutes away from the scene.

"Thanks to the quick reaction of several soldiers, they were able to close off the doors to that auditorium," Cone said, adding that a "female civilian officer" was thought to be the first to shoot Hasan and end the rampage.

After interviewing over 100 people at the scene, authorities appear to have ruled out the possibility of a second shooter. Hasan was "not currently speaking to investigators," Cone said.

"There were literally three bold. All have been interviewed, and at this time we believe the evidence indicates it was a single shooter," said Cone.

There was no official word on motive. Hasan had transferred to Fort Hood to help form Walter Reed Medical Center, where he received a poor performance evaluation, according to an official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the case publicly.

'Very devout'

While living in Washington, he attended prayers at a local Muslim community center at least once a day, seven days a week, according to Maryland imam Faizul Khan.

Khan, a former imam at the center, told The Washington Post that Hasan was "very devout," and asked him various religious questions.

"But there was nothing extremist in his questions. He never showed any frustration ...He never showed any ... with his vengeance on anybody," Khan said.

A former colleague of Hasan's disagreed, saying he had voiced extreme positions in the past.

"He said, 'maybe the Muslims should stand up and fight against the aggressor,' as first we thought he was talking about how Muslims should stand up and help the armed forces in Iraq and in Afghanistan, but apparently that wasn't the case," Colonel Terry Lee told Fox News.

Lee, who said he had worked with Hasan, said he was being sent to Afghanistan. He said Hasan had hoped Obama would pull troops out of Afghanistan and long and got into frequent arguments with others in the military who supported the wars.

2 pistols

The shooter used two pistols, one of them semiautomatic. Neither were military-issued, Hertzog said.

Video from the scene showed police patrolling the area with handguns and rifles, ducking behind buildings for cover. Sirens could be heard wailing while a woman's voice on a public-address system urged people to take cover.

"I was confused and just shocked," said Spc. Jerry Bichard, 27, who works in the combat unit was not on duty during the shooting. "Everyone was just ready for it. But here you can't ever defend yourself."

Soldiers at Fort Hood don't carry weapons unless they are doing training exercises.

STAFF Sgt. Ponciano Vea, 23, combat to Savannah Brown, 23, outside the main gate after a shooting at Fort Hood, Texas, on Thursday. AP

The Soldier Readiness Center holds hundreds of people and is one of the most populated parts of the base, said Steve Moore, a spokesperson for III Corps at Fort Hood.

The wounded were dispersed among hospitals in central Texas, Cone said. Their identities, and the identities of the dead, were not immediately released.

Amber Baltz, 19, was shot in the stomach but was in stable condition, said her mother, Lisa Hlavaty of Wisconsin.

"She was just sending, 'Love that she was shot in the belly," Hlavaty said.

Single, no children

Hasan, whose family said he was born to suburban Washington, is single with no children, Fox geochased from Virginia Beach, where he was a member of the Reserve Officer Training Corps and earned a bachelor's degree in biochemistry in 1997.

He received his medical degree from the uniformed Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland, in 2003 and was in Walter Reed for his psychiatric internship, residency and a fellowship.

The attack happened just down the road from one of the worst mass shootings in US history. On Oct. 16, 1991, George Hennard smashed his pickup truck through a Luby's Cafeteria window in Killeen, Texas, and fired on the luncheon crowd with a high-powered pistol, killing 22 people and wounding at least 20 others.

World's biggest US base

No other shooting at a military base in the US has been this severe since the deadly in Thursday's. In 1995, a gunman at Fort Knox shot five civilian coworkers, killing three, and then fatally shot himself.

In May 2007, five men suspected of being Islamic militants were arrested by the FBI on a plot to attack the sprawling Fort Dix in New Jersey. Four were sentenced in April to life imprisonment, and the fifth to 33 years.

Covering 676 square kilometers, Fort Hood, the biggest US military base in the world, is the headquarters of the Army's 3rd Corps, the 4th Infantry Division and the 1st Cavalry Division. All those units have seen extensive duty in Iraq. Home to about 52,000 troops as of earlier this year, it is located halfway between Austin and Waco. AP and AFP

MAJOR HASAN

COMBAT SITUATION Soldiers from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment secure the grounds of the Soldier Readiness Center in a show of force as they help in the apprehension of Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan on Thursday. Hasan, a psychiatrist set to be shipped overseas, went berserk at the Fort Hood Army post Thursday killing 12 people and wounding 31. AP

Hillary to make lightning visit here on way to Singapore

Frances Mangosing
Philippine Daily Inquirer

Reliable, the source said.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has neither confirmed nor denied the Clinton visit. DFA spokesperson Ed Malaya said they had heard of such reports in the media but refused to comment further.

No official word

But a diplomat said arrangements were indeed being made for Clinton's visit but that this would not become official until the US State Department and the DFA make a simultaneous official announcement.

"Until then, nothing is set," said the source who declined to discuss other details of the Clinton visit, including the date.

Officials are cautious about confirming such visits as a premature announcement would be considered a grievous breach of protocol.

In Mindanao, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he was not aware of a planned visit by Clinton.

"I don't know how likely it will be. If it is, people would have been talking about it in Malacañang," he said.

However, Ermita had not mentioned it when they talked yesterday, adding he was unable to confirm it with the DFA.

Setting the stage

The talks with Clinton will "set the stage" for Mrs Arroyo's expected meeting with US President Barack Obama at the Apec summit, the first source said.

The discussions with Clinton "will be foreshadowing," and could touch on US concerns about the 2010 elections, the leadership transition next year, US financial assistance and Philippine complaints with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the source said.

"Most likely, Secretary Clinton will reiterate the US position on clean elections and the smooth transition after the 2010 elections," the source said.

Second RP visit

Clinton has visited the Philippines in 1998, when she accompanied her husband, the then US President Bill Clinton, for the Apec summit held at the Subic Freeport that year.

Bill Clinton and Mrs Arroyo were classmates at the Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. from 1964 to 1968.

Hillary Clinton parlayed her eight years as First Lady into a high-flying political career, getting herself elected to the US Senate and running close to becoming president herself, squaring off with Obama in the fiercely fought battle for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2008.

She and Mrs Arroyo figure prominently in every list of the world's most powerful women.

Succession of top US officials

The Clinton visit (Hyria Maria is curious on the heels of recent high-level official visits to the country of US Sec. Bill Nelson in August, Central Intelligence Agency Chief Leon Panetta in July and Defense Secretary Robert Gates in June.

Washington considers the Philippines a vital ally in the global war against terrorism as well as regional security amid the growing expansionism of China and the aggressive nuclear ambitions of North Korea.

The Southeast Asian region is also believed to hold rich deposits of oil and gas and US energy companies have been busy searching and drilling for oil in the region.

Third Asian visit

This will be Clinton's second visit to Southeast Asia and third in Asia since being appointed Obama's secretary of state. On her inaugural foreign trip after her appointment, she visited Japan, Indonesia, South Korea and China last February.

She visited Thailand last July for the Asean Regional Forum, a multilateral dialogue bringing together the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, including the Philippines, and 17 other countries, including the US and China. Security and political issues dominated the discussions.

Clinton's visit to Thailand was also seen as a way to boost the US presence in the region amid China's growing influence.

With a report from Dona Dominguez and Kristine Alave

NEWS

Meralco to raise electricity rates this month

By Aury R. Reyes

CUSTOMERS OF THE MANILA ELECTRIC CO. (Meralco), the country's biggest power distributor, will have to pay an additional 25 centavos per kilowatt-hour for their electricity bills this month due to the higher cost of power supplied by power generation companies.

Thus, households consuming 100 kWh of electricity a month or less will see their November bills rise by P25, while those consuming up to 200 kWh a month can expect their bills to increase by P50.

Fermin dela Peña, Meralco vice president for utility economics, explained that the price of electricity for November actually increased by 32.7 centavos per kWh, after the generation charge rose to P4.2206 per kWh.

"This adjustment in the generation charge will, however, be tempered by the reduction in transmission charges and the deferred Purchased Power Agreement refund ordered by the Energy Regulatory Commission, amounting to 8 and 1.7 centavos per kWh, respectively," dela Peña said.

He added that the cooler weather at this time of the year would also temper the effect of the said generation rate adjustment on the overall bills of customers.

Dela Peña attributed the increase in generation charge to a number of factors, including the lower volumes of electricity supplied by independent power producers (IPPs) following a reduced consumption during the October supply month (Sept. 26 to Oct. 25).

The decline was blamed on the series of storms that had hit Manila and other parts of Luzon, which had in turn, caused massive power outages.

Meralco sources power from three IPPs namely the 500-MW San Lorenzo and 1,000-MW Sta. Rita power plants in Batangas, both of which are operated by the Lopez-owned First Gen and the Quezon Power Ltd. Co., respectively.

"Sold in this are the prolonged power outages in some portions of the Meralco franchise area," Dela Peña further noted.

The higher cost of power from the National Power Corp. (Napocor) and the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM) likewise contributed to the overall increase in the generation charge, she added.

She further said that higher fuel cost and the slight depreciation of the peso were also among the factors responsible for the rise in overall generation costs.

Dela Peña stressed, however, that even with the increase this month, the current generation charge is still lower than levels during the previous months, which had peaked at P5.02 per kWh in April.

Aplus METRO
Letty Abadeda S. Ubaldo

Flores' cosmetic changes revealed by doc

Gang leader wanted a new look

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE DOCTOR WHO ALLEGEDLY PERFORMED PLASTIC SURGERY on Alvin Flores surfaced yesterday at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) headquarters in Manila, claiming the slain gang leader used an alias when he sought the procedure.

Dominador Pedrosa, a licensed cosmetic surgeon and owner of Clinica de Asciplede, showed up at the NBI headquarters in Manila yesterday morning on the invitation of the bureau's deputy director for intelligence services.

His appearance came close on the heels of a raid early yesterday afternoon conducted by joint teams of the NBI and the Philippine National Police on a suspected hide of gang members still at large in Pandiel, Bulacan province [See related story on page A2].

The doctor refused to answer questions from the media, insisting that he was there only on the invitation of NBI-IEIS chief and lawyer Raul Lamela, and that he would talk about the case and Alvin Flores' medical records only to the official.

"I am used to these kinds of cases," he said initially. "I am totally uninterested by the court but swollen-legal matters. This is not unusual, but this matter is quite different because the matter has become sensationalized."

Virgilio Garcia, a lawyer who accompanied Pedrosa, told reporters that his client was not defending himself. "He has nothing to defend himself against. The NBI will just be asking him clarificatory questions," he pointed out.

Lamela added that the questions would only revolve around the cosmetic surgery procedures done on Flores.

A source in the NBI-IEIS, who requested anonymity for lack of authority to speak on the matter, told Inquirer that Flores had gone to Clinica de Asciplede for cosmetic surgery on Sept. 23.

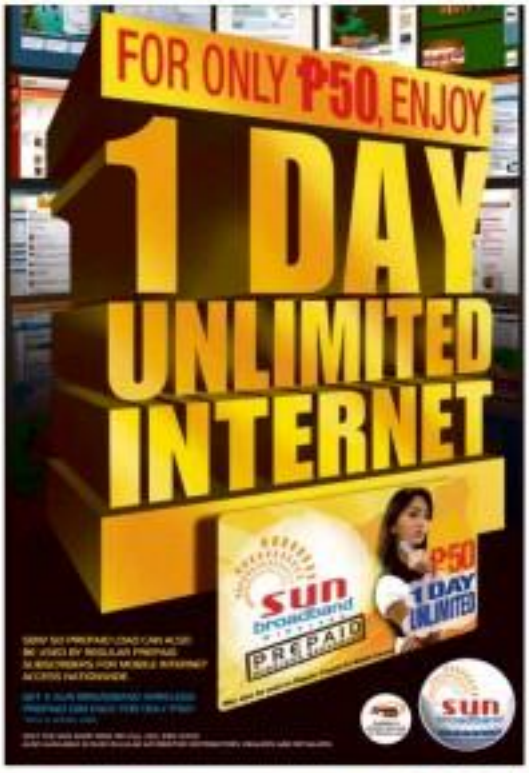
The source said that when Flores went there, he used the name "Jules" and presented to be gay. Flores also told the doctor that he was referred to the clinic by his cousin, Michael Flores.

Flores said he wanted a nose job, and subsequently himself to the procedure. His eyelids were pulled lower so he would appear slant-eyed, and he also wanted dimples.

Previously, Lamela said they wanted Pedrosa to tell them how he knew Flores, if he was aware of Flores' notoriety at the time of the surgery, what kind of surgical procedures were performed, and the purpose of the plastic surgery.

The source told Inquirer that although Pedrosa was cooperating with the NBI, he was not put off the hook. "It depends on his statements and our investigation. We cannot say he is off the hook yet," he cautioned.

Rene Bathersela, a suspected member of the gang who was arrested recently, earlier told the NBI that Flores had undergone surgery to change his appearance and evade arrest.



New and improved club with tighter security to reopen in Taguig City

By Erika Sauler

MORE THAN TWO MONTHS AFTER IT was ordered closed, the Taguig City government approved the application of the owners of the casino-turned Embassy Superclub to put up a new establishment.

The new bar, to be named Encore, will operate under the same management but with a different business concept.

Taguig City Vice Mayor George Elias said part of Encore's entertainment concept was the inclusion of jazz nights, ballroom dance sessions, stand-up comedy acts, film screenings and Sunday brunches.

"The business concept is entirely different from the Embassy we used to know. We believe this new concept will attract a more mature audience far different from the younger and rowdy crowd of the former Embassy," Elias said.

The Taguig city government ordered the closure of Embassy Superclub and Embassy Cuisine in August following a series of brawls and unsavory incidents on or near its premises, including a stabbing incident involving a businessman. The suspect allegedly escaped with the connivance of the club's employees. Embassy management was then asked to come up with a better business concept.

In a report dated Nov. 3, the Taguig City Council's joint committees on Trade, Commerce and Industry, and Peace and Order and Drug Abuse Prevention endorsed the Encore proposal to the city's Business Permit and Licensing Office, subject to final reviews and approval of the mayor.

The report said representatives from Encore informed the council of the new club's interior and lighted security measures.

According to the Encore management, the club will have 70 CCTV cameras and 50 security officers, apart from two security guards of the Ayala-owned commercial hub.

'Ondoy' victims file raps vs MMDA, 2 other gov't agencies

By DJ Yap

MIGUEL ARAEZA LOST HIS mother, his wife and their five children to Tropical Storm "Ondoy" last month.

Now, the 33-year-old is blaming Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chair Bayani Fernando, engineer Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane and weather bureau officials for the tragedy.

Together with 21 typhoon victims, Araeza has filed negligence charges against the MMDA chair, the Department of Public Works and Highways secretary and officials of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Araeza, whose tragic story was featured in Inquirer.net Oct. 1 issue, said the other respondents accused officials of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple loss and damage to property, according to the charges filed in the Manila Prosecutor's Office Thursday.

They also charged DPWH Director Patrick Lucas, Pagasa Executive Director Prisco Nilo, Pagasa Operations Chief Nathaniel Cruz, Pagasa Meteorological Division Chief Anna Espinueva, Pagasa Supervising Engineer Candido Davis, Barangay Power Corp. President Froilan Sampilo, and MMDA Special Operations Director Ramon Santiago.

The complainants took the officials to task for not issuing a warning or evidence that Angat, La Mesa and Ipo dams would release floodwaters, thereby leaving Marikina residents vulnerable to the floods.

The complainants were Araeza, Rafael Antonio, Thelma Avendaño, Mario Baguio, Emmanuel Barrera, Clarence Bautista, Roberto Cruz, Ofelia Ines, Pha Grace, Elmer Penaflor, Gerry Salcedo and Jocelyn Valdivia.

Except for Araeza, who lives in Concepcion Uno, and Bautista, who lives in Concepcion Dos, the complainants are residents of Sta. Teresita Village.

Araeza lost his mother Ma. Flor Bravo, 55, wife Desiree Bonifacio, 29, and their children Ma. Pinedelaria, 11, Tessie, 9, and Miguelito, 7, BLJ., 5, and Lucky, two months old, after floodwaters filled his bungalow in Concepcion I, Barangay Tumana.

"Every night I can't stop thinking about them. I wish I had died too," he said in the inquirer.net interview.

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Why there is anarchy in the streets

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THERE'S A COMPLETE breakdown of law and order, but it seems the Arroyo administration is too concerned.

President Ebdane's primary concern is staying in power beyond 2010 through a congressional seat in her district in Pampanga province.

And because the President does not seem to show concern about the robberies, kidnapping and killings in the streets, her chief of police, Director General Avelino Razon, she doesn't seem to care, while he seems his relief.

That's anarchy in the streets because we have a lame duck and corrupt administration that is held in contempt by the citizenry.

Criminals smell the rot of this inept leadership and exploit the situation.

* * *

Major Leonardo Saldivar III of San Nicolas, Pangasinan, admits two of the members of the Alvin Flores Gang that robbed banks and malls in Divine Mandia were his men.

But he hastens to add that he didn't know what they were doing when they were out of his sight.

If you believe him, you must be naive.

* * *

Haven't you noticed that robberies on election dates were big robberies are rampant?

That's because some politicians use rent-a-mob to disrupt elections.

The reason the leader of the Alvin Flores Gang was killed in a shootout is because his political handlers thought he became "too hot" to handle.

These politicians could have caused on their guard, using persons who posed as informants.

* * *

The killing of Alvin Flores, the robbery gang leader, in a shootout was too good to be true.

When something is "too good to be true," most often it's unbelievable.

Why did the law enforcement agents who cornered Flores kill him when they could have taken him alive?

A lot of vital information could have been extracted from Flores during interrogation—like who were financing his group—if he was captured alive.

* * *

I'm reminded of rumors, which persist up to this day, that the reason the 11 members of the dreaded Kuratong Baleleng Gang were executed by the police was because they had 42 million in cold cash when they were captured.

Dead men tell no tales.

* * *

Do you know that the top officer of the Kuratong Baleleng robbers was allegedly not murdered by police operatives, but by greed?

I have it on good authority that when that cop arrived on the scene, all he reportedly got was an M-16 firearm.

He allegedly complained to the superintendent in the incident, saying he should be given money reportedly taken from the gang.

But the "executioners" were allegedly too greedy to share their loot with him.

Many say that was why the Kuratong Baleleng gang robbers was exposed.

* * *

A local manufacturing company has filed a complaint against its rival in the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for unfair trade practices.

The local manufacturer said the rival company blocks the distribution of its new product in big grocery stores and supermarkets by asking the outlets not to sell its products.

The product being prevented from being displayed in the supermarket shelves is canned tuna that both companies manufacture.

If the complaint is true, then DTI should step in because consumers are not given a chance to choose which local product to buy.

Monopoly has no place in a free enterprise society.

School attendance up after the storms

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

ATTENDANCE RATES IN MOST schools in the Marikina area have gone back to normal nearly two months after Tropical Storm "Ondoy" unleashed the worst floods in Metro Manila, the Department of Education National Capital Region office said.

NCR Director Teresita Inciong said yesterday that attendance rates reached 96 percent in most schools, while a few reported 100 percent attendance.

Classes were suspended when Ondoy finally roamed after Ondoy attendance rates were between 20 percent and 30 percent only.

She also allayed fears that the destruction wrought by Ondoy would result in higher dropout rates among public school children this school year.

Some schools are still known for a few families who lost their homes to the floods. In Marikina City for instance, nine schools are still being used as evacuation centers. However, classes were not disrupted because only a few rooms are being used by evacuees, Inciong said.

Kindergarten to Grade 6 pupils admitted that some schools as evacuation centers had affected class schedules.

In a press conference last week, Bacani said they were mindful of the learning zone of schools often used as evacuation centers so evacuees could stay in there units during the day. That way, students could still use the classrooms even if there are still evacuees in their schools.

More Greater Metro towns deserve city status—LCP

By DJ Yap

THE LEAGUE OF CITIES OF THE Philippines (LCP) and some progressive towns in the outskirts of Metro Manila are keen asserting of city status than the 16 mostly urbanized Philippine municipalities pushing for city hood, despite having less income.

At a recent press conference, LCP president and Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos sounded an alarm against what he called "mad rush" used by the 16 towns to achieve city status despite a Supreme Court decision declaring with finality that they were disqualified.

Abalos said they had received information that the 16 towns in Northern Luzon, Eastern and Central Visayas, Southern Luzon, and Mindanao allegedly had been privately setting individual Supreme Court justices to persuade them to change their vote.

Based on government records, the towns presented to comes ranging only from P7.5 million to P56 million.

The towns had asked the high court to be exempted from a law requiring municipalities to have locally generated incomes of P100 million or higher before they could be declared cities.

Abalos noted that some towns south and east of Metro Manila were far more deserving of city status, including Cabuyao, Laguna, which had revenues of 2007 million, Cainta, Rizal, which had P311 million, and Silang, Cavite, which had P254 million, in 2007.

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Researchers say obesity causes 100,000 US cancer cases yearly

WASHINGTON—OBESITY CAUSES more than 100,000 cases of cancer in the United States each year—and the number will likely rise as Americans get fatter, researchers said on Thursday.

Having too much body fat causes nearly half the cases of endometrial cancer—a type of cancer of the uterus—and a third of esophageal cancer cases, the American Institute for Cancer Research said.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States after heart disease. The American Cancer Society projects that 1.47 million people will be diagnosed with cancer this year and 562,000 will die of it.

More than 26 percent of Americans are obese, defined as having a body mass index of 30 or higher. BMI is equal to weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared. A person 160 centimeters tall becomes obese at 82 kilograms.

Additionally, nearly a third of Americans are overweight, defined as having a BMI of 25 to 30.

The study combined findings from AICR research linking diet, physical activity and fatness with cancer risk with national surveys on obesity and cancer incidence.

"We then worked out the percentage of those specific cancers that would be prevented if everyone in the United States maintained a healthy weight," the group said in a statement.

Here are some of its estimates of cancer types that could be prevented annually if Americans stayed slender:

- Esophageal—731 percent of cases or 5,000 people
- Pancreatic—20 percent or 11,900 people
- Gallbladder—21 percent or 2,800 people
- Colon—9 percent or 13,200 people
- Breast—17 percent or 33,000 people
- Kidney—24 percent or 13,900 people

In July, federal and other researchers estimated that obesity-related diseases account for nearly 10 percent of all medical spending in the United States or an estimated $147 billion a year. Reuters

Honduras pact stalls over unity gov't

TEGUCIGALPA—Ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya said early on Friday that an accord to end a bitter political crisis had failed after de facto leader Roberto Micheletti moved to form a new government without him.

The rival leaders had agreed last week to end a four-month political crisis and form a so-called unity and reconciliation cabinet by Thursday, but they drew disagreement over who would lead the cabinet.

Zelaya declined to name any members to the cabinet, and Micheletti said he was going ahead without them.

"We've completed the process of forming a unity government ... It represents a wide spectrum despite the fact that Mr Zelaya did not send a list of representatives," Micheletti said in a televised speech to Hondurans.

Zelaya said through a spokesperson that the US-brokered pact was dead and blamed the de facto government for its failure.

"It was a pantomime to act like they were engaging in a dialogue when what they've done is, like the coup d'etas, destroy Honduran democracy," Zelaya representative Enrique Reina told reporters.

Earlier, ministers from the de facto cabinet resigned to make way for the new government, which Micheletti said will include cabinet posts for two of the different political factions.

The impoverished coffee and textile exporting country has been isolated diplomatically and cut off from international aid since Zelaya was toppled by soldiers and sent into exile in his pajamas in a June 28 coup that set off Central America's worst political crisis in two decades.

Zelaya had said elections scheduled for Nov. 29 will not be legitimate unless he is first restored to power to finish the remainder of his term that ends in January.

Under the accord between the two leaders, Honduras lawmakers in Congress were to decide if Zelaya can return to the presidency. The United States and the Organization of American States have stepped demanding Zelaya's reinstatement. Reuters

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The WORLD

Editor Lamberto B. Gocco

Iran shocked: Student slams Khamenei

BEIRUT—AN UNASSUMING COLLEGE MATHS student has become an unlikely hero to many in Iran for daring to criticize the country's most powerful man to his face.

Mohmoud Vahidnia has received an outpouring of support from government opponents for the challenge...unprecedented in a country where insulting Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is a crime punishable by prison.

Perhaps most surprising, the young man's wife has so far suffered no repercussions from the authorities at a questioned-and-answer session between Khamenei and students at Vahidnia's Sharif Technical University.

In fact, Iran's clerical leadership appears to be treating the incident as a sign of its vulnerance—to insult, so that some Iranians at first believed the 20-minute exchange was staged by the government, though opposition commentators are now convinced Vahidnia was the real thing.

Details of the encounter were reported on the state-news agency IRNA and in a progovernment newspaper, Kayhan, which gave its account with a headline reading, "The revolutionary leader's fatherly response to critical youth." From Khamenei's official website mentioned the incident.

Still, some of those in attendance at the Oct. 28 Iran are Khamenei appeared taken aback by the questioning and left the meeting early, according to commentary posted on pro-reform websites.

The session began with a speech in which Khamenei told the students the "biggest crime" was to question the results of the June 12 presidential election that returned hard-liner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to power. Khamenei himself declared Ahmadinejad the victor despite opposition claims of widespread fraud.

After the speech, Vahidnia raised his hand, then for 20 minutes he criticized the Iranian leader over the fierce crackdown on postelection protests, in which the opposition says 69 people were killed and thousands were arrested.

In fateful excerpts broadcast on state TV, the thin, bespectacled Vahidnia was shown standing behind a podium, gesturing as he spoke for emphasis.

"I don't know why in this country it's not allowed to make any kind of criticism of you," said the student, who sported a long-sleeved blue polo shirt and appeared young.

"In the past three to five years than I have been reading newspapers, I have seen no criticism of you, not even by the Assembly of Experts, whose duty is to criticize and supervise the performance of the leader," he said, referring to the elected body that chooses the country's mullahs.

Khamenei countered, "We welcome criticism. We never said we're criticize us... There's plenty of criticism that I receive," according to accounts on state media and opposition websites.

VAHIDNIA speaking in a meeting with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran.

The boldness of Vahidnia's comments underlines how Iran's presidential turmoil has undermined the once rock-solid taboo against challenging the Supreme Leader. During demonstrations, young protesters have frequently chanted "death to the dictator"—referring to Khamenei—and even "Khamenei is a murderer." Several high-ranking pro-opposition clerics have also been openly critical.

The Supreme Leader stands at the top of the hierarchy of Iran's clerical rulers, and has nearly as supported as he final on political issues. Scores of Iranian writers, bloggers and academics have been jailed for uttering what authorities have deemed as insults to Khamenei. AP

Palestinian president says he wants to quit

RAMALLAH, WEST BANK—Of announcing he doesn't want another term in office, embattled Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas pushed the Mideast peace effort into unknown territory on Thursday, opening the way to a succession battle that could play into the hands of his rival, the militant Hamas.

But it also could boost the prospects of a popular candidate who reportedly wants to run for the presidency from his Israeli prison cell.

Abbas blamed his decision on the stalemate in peace talks, but the wording of his televised speech raised speculation that it was not final and could be a ploy for pushing Israel and the US toward a larger compromise.

He said only that it was "clear to me not to run in the upcoming election" which are set for January but could be delayed, extending his current term indefinitely.

Abbas took over after the death of Yasser Arafat in 2004, and Western leaders have come to see him as a symbol of moderation. Although criticized as indecisive and associated with the old guard of his Fatah party, he has given free rein to his prime ministers, Salam Fayyad, in reform the West Bank's economy and boost its police, which has resulted in a limited economic upturn.

But the stalemate with Israel overshadows all, and Fatah activists say the party is in a panic, fearing a fragmented slate of candidates that would hand victory to Hamas.

Less last month, Abbas told US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton that he would not run, four weekend aides Press Ahmed Barrack Obama called him and expressed his reassurances to Abbas on yesterday, officials said.

Insiders say he was dishearten ened by Washington's refusal to press Israel harder for a freeze on West Bank settlement construction, and that this week's visit by Clinton, where she appeared to side with Israel over the settlement issue, was the last straw. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

UN Assembly calls for probes of alleged Gaza war crimes

UNITED NATIONS—The UN General Assembly on Thursday empowered Israel and the Palestinians to go side-by-side crimes allegedly committed in Gaza nearly a year ago, a move which the Jewish state said would hurt the quest for Middle East peace. The 192-member assembly overwhelmingly approved an Arab-sponsored resolution that endorsed a UN report accusing both Israel and the Palestinians of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity during the 22-day Gaza conflict that ended in January. The move capped a two-day debate on the controversial, 575-page report by a panel led by respected human rights lawyer Richard Goldstone. The vote was 114 in favor and 18 against, with 44 abstentions. A simple majority was needed for adoption. Israel, which had strenuously opposed the outstanding resolution and the UN report that it embraced, voted against it as did its staunchest ally, the United States, along with Australia and a few European countries. A majority of European Union countries, including Britain, France, Sweden and Spain, abstained after failing to secure amendments to the text, including one that would have dropped references to possible Security Council action if the report's findings are not implemented. Russia also abstained. AFP

Iran tested advanced nuclear warhead, Guardian reports

LONDON—The UN nuclear watchdog has asked Iran to explain evidence suggesting the Islamic Republic's scientists have experimented with an advanced nuclear warhead design, the Guardian reported in its Friday edition. The newspaper, citing what it describes as "previously unpublished documentation" from an International Atomic Energy Agency compiled dossier, said Iranian scientists may have tested high-explosive components of a "two-point implosion" device. The IAEA said in September it has no proof Iran has or once had a covert atomic bomb program. Reuters

Saudi fighter jets bomb Yemen rebels across border

SANA'A, Yemen—Saudi Arabia sent fighter jets and artillery bombarding rebels across the border into northern Yemen on Thursday in a military intervention apparently aimed at helping its troubled southern neighbor contain an escalating Shiite rebellion. Arab diplomats and the rebels said. The Saudis—owners of a sophisticated air force they rarely use—have been increasingly worried that extremism and instability in Yemen could spill over to their country, the world's largest oil exporter. The offensive came two days after the killing of a Saudi soldier, reported on the rebels. Yemen-based army military army by Saudi Arabia inside its borders. But Yemen's president is a key ally of the Saudis, making it highly unlikely the bombing would have launched the offensive without tacit Yemeni agreement. AP

Gunman shoots and injures 3 near Tokyo, hides in building

TOKYO—A lone gunman shot and wounded three men on Friday in a residential area near Tokyo and then took refuge in a building, officials say. Police were negotiating with the gunman in Yokohama, police spokesperson Shigeki Umezawa said. He said one of The three wounded were also in critical condition and the other two had light injuries. Media reports said the shooting appeared to be gangster-related, and TV footage showed police surrounding a building. The shooting took place in a residential area in Yokohama, south of Tokyo, according to Kiro Ikeda, a city fire department official. Guns are strictly controlled in Japan, and shootings are rare. AP

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Happy Manny** ready to make history /A22

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres • Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

SPORTS

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■ **Woods** grabs share of WGC halfway lead /A23

BURGER King's Egay Billones forces his way past Bayrod Hugnatan of Alaska in last night's rematch.

Aces sustain big roll

Whip Whoppers as Miller, Hugnatan shine

By Marang R. Castillo

ALASKA ROLLED TO ITS SIXTH STRAIGHT win last night, blasting Burger King, 87-73, at the Cuneta Astrodome to savor three-full games ahead of its closest pursuers in the KFC-Philippine Cup.

Willie Miller scored 19 points and Bayrod Hugnatan chipped in 16 on top of eight rebounds to pace the Aces, whom early success was attributed by veteran Jeffrey Cariaso to the Aces' staying humble and grounded.

"I know that people are talking about the stars of 2006 and 2008... those were very special teams that I was fortunate to be a part of," said Cariaso, the remaining member of the last Alaska squad that had similar 6-0 starts.

"Our competition (with those teams with the one we have now) is that we genuinely like each other," he added. "When you guys talk about being family, I think we really are, and with that, good things happen.

LAST TODAY
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"What's pretty amazing [about this team] is that the guys know how to stay grounded, to stay humble and keep worrying about us as a team (despite the successes)."

The Aces dominated the game early before breaking away in the third period to take leads of as many as 20 points. Alaska was outscored only in the fourth period— by four... as coach Tim Cone got almost everyone in a word here.

Bonjay Hannah scattered 13 points for the Whoppers, but Gary David scored just five markers in only 19 minutes.

"I don't know when to say I didn't expect it to be like this tonight. However, I didn't expect it to be like this tonight. However, I didn't expect it to be like this tonight. However,

Happy Manny ready to make history

By Francis T.J. Ochoa

HOLLYWOOD—HE'S FIT, HE'S HAPPY, HE'S ON TRACK TO LOGGING THE targeted number of sparring rounds and, most of all, he isn't planning to hide behind a wall of excuses no matter how the fight turns out.

Because in Manny Pacquiao's mind, there's only going to be one outcome when he squares off with Miguel Cotto on Nov. 14 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, where he will be grasping for the Puerto Rican's WBO welterweight title.

"Decisively," said the Filipino ring icon.

Pacquiao is banking for a world crown in an unprecedented seventh weight class but is obviously generally regarded as Sunday's pound-for-pound king. And mystery doesn't seek indulgences.

"There'll be no excuses for this fight," he vowed. "I've trained hard and I know I'm strong enough to fight for 12 rounds."

Pacquiao sparred six rounds Thursday afternoon behind the barricaded doors of the Wild Card gym and, judging by his

PACQUIAO: "He's just a southpaw."

reflexes and movements, he's in much better condition than he was when he wanted to move it on, his form was there," Roach said.

Pacquiao is scheduled for a long road work and 6 more gym training Friday and six more rounds of sparring on Saturday before making the road trip in the West to Hollywood on Monday.

Every now and then during Thursday's training, Pacquiao would step on the ring mirrors in front of the mirror and hold his pose for the cameras, showing off a well-chiseled body that he proudly calls "a product of very hard work."

And as far as strength and conditioning coach Alex Ariza is concerned, Pacquiao has the body of a beast.

"He's literally pure muscle," Ariza said, adding that the fighter's body fat is now at 6.2 percent. To illustrate how fit Pacquiao is, Ariza said that normally, a "super welter has a body fat of 8 percent."

"He can obviously handle the added weight and the added size without losing his speed or strength," Ariza said.

Pacquiao weighed 140 pounds Thursday although Ariza said the Fortune drops to 146 after every workout. He added that Pacquiao will easily meet the catch weight of 143 in the morning of the weigh-in, just after eating breakfast, and that there will be no need for weight-loss measures.

"That can be very stressful, but he is a good mood," Ariza said. "Fighting is an empty stomach is delicate for a fighter because it will upset him."

Ariza said Pacquiao would climb in the ring at 1:00 lb. which is the Filipino's "maximum fighting weight."

Since losing to Erik Morales via unanimous decision in their four years ago, Pacquiao has racked up 10 straight victories. Three of his last four wins were for the Generoso Ibarra City southpaw titles in three weight classes—super featherweight, lightweight and light welterweight.

The only non-title victory he had was his eight-round demolition of legend Oscar De La Hoya in which most of the 10 judges with foreign journalists, Pacquiao selected to be his biggest match.

Pacquiao endures it all in training

By Francis T.J. Ochoa

HOLLYWOOD—MANNY PACQUIAO WAS doing crunches in front of a television crew when the pain of his brutally eighteen caught up with him. Young himself on, he let out a yell.

"We have that take it," he screamed. And then he produced even more crunches.

Such a willing athlete is a blessing to strength and conditioning coaches like Alex Ariza, who has admitted in the past that his main problem with the Filipino superstar lies in asking Pacquiao to taper off.

But on Nov. 14, when the pound-for-pound champion chases after Miguel Cotto's WBO welterweight belt, Team Pacquiao will have another edge, according to Ariza: Guidance from the sidelines.

Ariza on Thursday joined in the training of Cotto's cosmic partnering with trainer Freddie Roach in unveiling the steel ramp in the hopes of throwing a monkey wrench in to their preparations for the big bout.

"I've got one big advantage in my corner—Freddie Roach," Ariza told reporters at the Wild Card gym.

While Ariza showed a healthy dose of respect for his counterpart at Team Cotto, conditioning coach Phil Lauritsen, had affixed nothing outside of mockery for '22-pound-wonder Joe Santiago.

"Cotto has whoever that guy is—an average Joe," Ariza said.

Santiago has responded in just about everything Roach has put set there, even when Roach said he's been trying to get under the skin of Team Cotto.

"Now he wants me to put my trainer (of the past) trophy on the floor (during the fight) because he says he's the best," Roach said. "He'll see about that after the fight."

"They (Team Cotto) say I talk too much, but I'll keep trying to get (on) their heads when I can," he added.

The 31-year-old Santiago has worked the Cotto camp only once prior to the Pacquiao fight in Las Vegas. That was when Cotto hammered out a mere 15-round decision over Joshua Clottey early this year.

SPORTSWATCH

Media drivers in Ford TRS race

SEVEN TEAMS FROM THE MEDIA ZOOPLETS THE overall championship in the Ford Focus TRS Race of Champions final round at the Subic International Raceway.

The brothers of Philippine Star's Jeff Reyes and Manila Bulletin's Reyes and Aaron Aguilar's Vince Fernando and Inger Rivera share the lead with 11 points apiece, one step of the Manila Bulletin's Angel Perez and Jaime Bagain and two ahead of Aztec Mike Arcangel de Jesus Reyes and Ed Joaquin going into today's race.

Completing the field are Kia Sarah's Bobby Bargayan and Norman Lee (8 points), ABS's Eric Gutierrez and Mike Chanco (6 points) and the Inquirer/Bilyo Villanueva-Lozano and Sandy Prieto-Romualdez (4 points).

Best LGBA breeder known today

THE THIRD AND FINAL LEG OF THE LUZON Commercial Breeders Association (LGBA) 7-Obog Derby series blasts off at the San Juan Coliseum today with participants making their final bid for the coveted Breeder of the Year plum.

The overall frontrunners after Thursday's outing are LGBA president Rene Tan and Breeders Love Corporation Experts Arthur Aguilar (Tanguh LZ Gallo (20th) and Eileen Angeles (Pakisgan Anna (8). PC), all with 13.5 points each.

Rene Angeles (Pagmo) and Jun Lumenlino (Paree Jade Red) are one point with 12 points each.

'Balik-Makati' cockfest fires off

SOME 250 ENTRANT IN THE OPENING FIGHT OF the Metro Manila and nearby provinces are active today in the "Balik-Makati" Part 2 hosted by the One-Cock Gallera at Makati Coliseum.

Competitions start at 1 p.m. and end at 12 midnight, according to hosts Kags and Abe Badoza, who are offering a guaranteed price of P3 (3,000 Derby items P1,500).

The biggest prize of P45,000 will be pocketed by the derby fastest winner, with the handler and gaffer getting P3,000 and P1,000, respectively.

Rose shines as Bulls stop LeBron, Cavs

CLEVELAND, Ohio—LEBRON JAMES SCORED 38 of his 54 points in the fourth quarter and drilled a decisive jumper with 1:44 remaining to help the Chicago Bulls edge the Cleveland Cavaliers, 96-95, on Thursday.

Last season's Rookie of the Year Rose added 13 assists as the Bulls (3-2) held off the Cavaliers, who have dropped to 4-1 overall.

"It's huge," Rose told reporters. "Our chemistry on offense really isn't there yet. But you have time for that. If you can continue to stop people you'll be fine."

League MVP LeBron James scored 25 points for the Cavaliers, but lost the ball while driving to the basket for a potential game-winning drive with the Bulls leading, 96-93.

The Cavaliers (3-1), who had a 40-2 regular-season record at home last season, have lost twice already this season in Cleveland.

In a tightly contested game, the Cavaliers had possession as they trailed by a point with four seconds to go but James drove to his left and the ball slipped out of his hands as he prepared to shoot.

James, who finished with seven rebounds and six assists, wanted a foul called on the play but did not get the whistle.

"I felt a push and some contact up top," James said. "Enough to put me on the free throw line? We, but it is a judgment call from the refs, and he saw what he saw."

In the only other game, Utah whipped San Antonio, 113-90. *Reuters*

It's final: No cash for extra Games bets

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISsion is sticking to its decision to fund only the 133 athletes and 47 officials recommended by the Southeast Asian Games selection committee for the Laos competition schedule from Dec. 9 to 18.

PSC chair Harry Ang-ging, in a letter to SEA Games chief of mission Wahi Tuvungco yesterday, categorically said "that the PSC remains firm in its stand to finance only those in the final listing that our agency's reps during our meeting."

The PSC statement came a day after POC deputy secretary general and organizer chief Mark Joseph made an appeal to the PSC to find support to what has now become a 360-strong delegation made up of 231 athletes and 129 officials.

Only two days earlier at the 95th Rotarian, POC spokesperson Joey Romasanta declared that the local Olympic body had already raised 70 percent of the P9.461 million budget for the 360 planned athletes.

Tuvungco, representing the POC, and PSC commissioner Joey Mandis prepared the original list of 133 athletes and 47 officials based mainly on the criteria of a gold or silver in the 2007 SEA Games.

Meanwhile, seven Judokas—part of the PETC's last-minute additions to the RP team—have received the good treatment they are getting from PSC officials.

The athletes said during yesterday's Sweep at Rampart they felt bad because only the four PSC-approved Judokas could get free meals in the PSC canteen.

The four Judokas approved by the PSC are John Baylon, Nancy Quiñones, Hadrian Tiamboko and Karen Ann Sabarreza.

ICTSI boosts golf partnership

By Mineng S. Castillo

PORT MACQUARIE RICKY BALON YESTERDAY reaffirmed his commitment to support local golf after sealing with Tierney Manotoc a deal merging his ICTSI-backed program with the famous Calatagan Clubbing partnership.

The deal now puts the country's two best amateurs—Mark Fernando and Jessel Ababa—under the program, which aims to restore the country's supremacy in the Asian region.

"It's both a privilege and an honor to be able to work hand in hand with Mr. Razon," Manotoc told the heiress. "Philippine golf can't ask for a better benefactor."

Manotoc, the former longtime Philippine team member, will head the coaching staff. He also handled the National Caddies' Open program based in Calatagan which developed legends, Ababa, Jonie Balanban and Reffee Bayron as amateur standouts.

Fernando is the reigning RP amateur champion, while Ababa was the reverse Isabela Open.

The duo finished 2-3 for the Hong Kong newcomers in Oleoseven Bay yesterday with Fernando firing a final round four-under 68 finish two strokes behind Australian Daniel Huber.

Ababa matched par 72 and was tied with a 286, six shots behind the Aussie.

TIGER Woods takes out of the bunker on the 16th hole in Friday's second round of the WGC-HSBC Champions. *AP*

Woods grabs share of WGC halfway lead

SHANGHAI—TIGER WOODS BIDDED HIS final hole to complete a second round two-under-par 67 that moved him into a share of the lead with Americans compatriots Nick Watney at the halfway stage of the WGC-HSBC Champions on Friday.

The world number one had sparked a raft of birdie chances early on another sunny day at the Sheshan International but made no mistake with a short putt at the 18th and joined first round leader Watney, who shot a 70, on 13-under for the tournament.

World number two Phil Mickelson picked up his ninth birdie of the day at the last for a 66 to round a stroke behind the leaders, alongside compatriot Hunter Mahan (69) and Spain's Alvaro Quiros (66) in a share of third.

Woods, runner-up on both his previous visits to Shanghai, backed off his opening drive a couple of times because of nervous clicking to the gallery but recovered his composure sufficiently to start his round with a birdie.

There followed a succession of missed birdie putts before an errant drive at the sixth left him bashing a rubbish tin with his driver in frustration.

The move resulted in the only blemish of his round for he finally got a par shown at the circuit and once home in four under par, the highlight of his back-nines 20-9 chip-in for birdie from the rough after a greenside bunker at the 16th.

"Today got off to a good start and I birdied the very first hole," Woods told reporters. "But after that, I didn't really make any putts. I had certainly some looks at them and didn't really capitalize on anything. Routers

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2. PROMO PERIOD. October 30 to November 15, 2009
3. COVERAGE. Nationwide
4. HOW TO JOIN. Legal age drinkers can participate in the promo by simply doing the following:
5. HOW TO WIN. Entries will be drawn randomly. One Grand Prize winner will receive a trip for 3 to watch the Colt45 URCC XV Onslaught Event in Araneta Coliseum, Inc. (ACI), through its promo agency Activ8one Inc. with the promotion during the abovementioned date in the Raffle Promo Mechanics. Grand Prize winner will receive: Airfare, Hotel Accommodation for the promotion winner and his companions, Tickets to Colt45 URCC XV Onslaught, Cash allowance and Colt45 Merchandise.
Raffle draw will be witnessed by a DTI-R7-BCD Representative, a Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines, Inc. (CCBPI) representative and Activ8one Inc. representative.
6. PROMO PERIOD. Each winner will receive three (3) tickets to Colt45 URCC XV Onslaught Live at the Araneta Coliseum on Friday, July 10, November 27, 2009, 8:00pm. Winners should send their valid ID(s) for verification purposes and a valid photo with the tickets.
TEXT PROMO MECHANICS:
1. For a Barkada to qualify, he/she must:
a. Be a Roxas, Quezon or San Juanico resident or employee of any participating LGU and registered and qualified voter of the LGU;
b. Have each his/her valid ID(s) verified;
c. Be at least 21 years old;
d. Must be 18 years old.
2. From October 30 to November 15, 2009, interested drinkers must join the promo by:
a. Purchasing 60 1.5-oz. bottles of Colt45 and collect the official receipt;
b. Text the promo code, the complete name of drinker (must be registered), LGU, full address (Barangay, City, Province) and contact number to 2366;
c. Drinkers registered, Text Colt45 MMA to 2366 to receive a valid entry no. Colt45 MMA and send to 2366;
d. After texting Colt45 MMA to 2366, a confirmation message will be sent to the drinker. Reply to the confirmation message with the following information: Name, age, birthdate, address, that will be sent to 2366.
Entries must text COLT45 space (RED) space name space registered with a corresponding address and send to 2366.
e. If registration is successful, a confirmation message will be sent to subscriber.
Reply to query:
Query (after sending of receipt number)
The 6 registering for the Colt45 URCC XV Promo! If you're one of the lucky ones, you will be contacted by our promo agent via text to confirm Colt45 URCC XV win. Please be ready with your valid ID(s) and proof of purchase to claim your prize. Stay tuned for more announcements on the Colt45 URCC XV Promo! Visit www.facebook.com/Colt45URCC for more updates.
f. If subscriber cannot be contacted, sends a notification message will be sent.
Reply to query:
Unreachable registration (170-2366): 1st (123-456-7890) shipped/qualified/claimed. If incomplete/undefined, kindly re-enter.
Ex: 2366 MMA Mary Grace/123 Fairlane Street, Mandaluyong/09123456789 for help: 2366).
g. All information sent will be kept confidential and will be used strictly for 2366 raffle promotion.
3. Registration is a one time process per 2366 card.
4. Requirements for sample entries:
The text confirming the receipt of registration provides and 2366 raffle promotion guidelines must be submitting.
Qualified entries must:
a. Be registered to promo;
b. Have valid receipt with valid date, purchase of the promotion (170-2366, 2366) at least 18 years old;
c. Have received a valid number and have valid confirmation message from 2366 with the promotion guidelines stated in the promotion duration.
5. Deadline of submission of entries is on November 15, 2009, 5:00pm.
6. Entries will be randomly drawn on a computer.
7. The "Board of Judges" composed of a duly authorized representative from Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines, Inc. (CCBPI), Activ8one Inc. and DTI-R7-BCD will be the representative who will supervise the drawing of winners on Monday, November 16, 2009, 9:00 am at Aseo Chino Bldg., Cebu City.
8. Decisions by the Board of Judges are final and non-appealable.
9. A total of ten (10) winners will be drawn during the electronic raffle draw.
10. A participant can only win once during the draw. Winners drawn from once will not be disqualified and re-raffle entry will be drawn.
11. All winners will be notified via text and mail.
12. Prizes are not transferable or convertible to cash.
13. Transportation and airfare, hotel allowance and meal accommodation for the personal delivery shall be provided by the promo agency.
14. Prizes can be claimed at SM Aseo Chino, Bridgetown Building, Cebu City on November 17 - 18. Winners must present their official receipt from which the winning code was taken, valid ID and proof of purchase. Failure to claim prize within the stipulated date, winner's ID, company ID upon claiming prizes.
15. Mike Enriquez Inc. reserves the right to use and/or publish the names, pictures, or images of the winners for its promotional purposes, or effect raffle/act involving additional payment to the winners.
16. All participants are presumed to have read and understood and agree and abide by the general mechanics and guidelines.
17. All employees of Mike Enriquez, Grupo Videovox & subsidiaries, and 2366 GMA Networks, Inc. agencies and their relatives up to the second degree of affinity or consanguinity are disqualified from joining the promo.
*Travel and Accommodation rates will be handled by Colt45 Inc Promotion Winners.
OFFICIAL BEER OF THE URCC

Editor Tonipet G. Malasmas ✦ Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

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SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE

Ateneo tossers clinch 4th spot

By Jane Manaoru

ATENEO-ORACOSE SCRAMBLED PAST Adamson in the last three sets to salvage an 18-25, 13-25, 26-24, 25-22, 15-13 decision yesterday in the Shakey's V-League Season 6 Second Conference at the SSCR Flying V Arena in San Juan.

The Lady Eagles sprang back to life through Bea Pascual, Angeline Gervacio, Gretchen Ho and guest player Chaci Soriano and finished the eliminations with four victories in seven games.

The impressive comeback also lifted the Eagles past the Lady Falcons to their sixth berth in a bid to play-going into the single-round quarterfinals starting next week.

"We hope to bring the winning feeling into the quarterfinals," said Ateneo coach Clint Wilson. "This is a big psychological boost for the team."

Soriano delivered 13 points, two-aces and 16 added 12 each and Pascual added nine points for the Eagles, who stopped an eight-game, head-to-head losing skid against the Lady Falcons.

Ateneo last scored victory against Adamson in Game 2 of their best-of-three series for third place in 2007.

After taking the first two sets in dominating fashion, the Falcons suddenly sputtered in the face of Ateneo's determined stand.

The Falcons, who loosed on the cold gusts of Pico brothers and Angela Benting, allowed the Eagles to steal the third set before the momentum shifted Ateneo's way in the last two frames.

Soriano scored 10 points, Benting had 20 hits while Jill Gentile scored 12 for the Lady Falcons, whose 3-6 record drops them into a quarterfinal showdown against San Sebastian tomorrow.

In the other game, Lyceum closed out its elimination stint by claiming the crown of the University of the Philippines, 25-23, 25-14, 24-26, 25-19, to finally win after six straight setbacks.

Joy Cases produced 22 hits, Jenelle Pena scored 11 points and Sonic Arenas and Mia Gallenzar teamed up with 14 points each as the Lady Pirates won the Lady Maroons in their seventh consecutive defeat.

CARMELA Lopez of Team U goes for the kill against Nikki Tabuluran of Lyceum in yesterday's game. AUGUST SEBASTIAN

Chiefs pace Champions League zonal

By Cedrik F. Tupaz

BACOLOD CITY—ARELLANO UNIVERSITY unleashed 16 triples and crushed Holy Trinity College, 108-87, Thursday to gain the inside track to the chase for two "Sweet 16" berths in the Philippine Collegiate Champions League zonal tournament.

The Chiefs cruised to their second straight victory in the four-team tournament with Jerry Miranda firing six triples to finish with 24 points at the West Negros University Gym.

University of San Carlos stunned West Negros University, 71-57, in a later game to stay in the hunt.

The Warriors, who lost to the Chiefs, 74-79, last Thursday, bounced the Mustangs with their tough defense to grab a 33-25 lead late in the first half.

The Chiefs still need to beat the Mustangs to secure their spot in the Sweet 16. If the Mustangs win and the Warriors prevail over the Wildcats in their last game, the quotient system will be applied to break the tie.

Another second tournament, which also dangles two spots to the national finals hosted by Senate and PLDT, got under way in Cebu yesterday with San Sebastian Colegio battling University of San Jose Recoletos and Adamson calling on University of Cebu.

Top Scorers
Team Leaders
Individual Leaders
ARELLANO 108—Miranda 24, Cabanero 16, Arnaiz 15, Gonzalez 10, Tolentino 10, Jimenez 9, Agustin 8, Aguilar 6, Salcedo 5, Sprenglaar 5, Palattao 4.
HTC 87—Bautista 30, Pagador 24, Flores 7, Amarille 4, Tarroza 3, De Mesa 3, Lumantas 2, De Jesus 2, Lumbatan 2, Mesura 2, Esguerra 1.
Quarters: 22-18, 49-35, 73-63, 108-87
Second Game
USC 71—Quiza 14, Bautista 12, Padilla 10, Salmoiraga 7, Bacarro 7, Cantomayor 5, Chiu 5, Galeon 5, Pesante 3, Cuello 2, Pacheco 2.
UNRC 57—Alfonso 19, Jumao-as 11, Amoc 8, Espera 6, Sapico 5, Jumawan 3, Lucero 2, Sumalinog 2, Aquino 2, Alberto 0.
Quarters: 17-16, 38-25, 54-42, 71-57

Wushu's Rifani shines

THE PHILIPPINES COLLECTED ITS THIRD SILVER MEDAL TO SURpass its previous best finish in the Asian Indoor Games.

Rifani Tolu, Maria Dagadas's silver medal in the women's 52-kilogram semifinal event and heavy final bids Zaid Larsan and Jay Ronald Singayan second bronze medals in the lightweight and welterweight divisions on the 4th day.

Rifani showed in China's Gong Jinjun, 3-2, at the Yeah Hwa Disc Gym after Larsan, 60KG bagged out 8 the semifinals to the 23rd SEA Games.

The Philippines can add one more gold to its collection with Michael Sobang vying for the flyweight title in muay thai against Thailand's Kanchai Nuanbohkom.

Cedrik F. Tupaz

RP's Medina lands shoot gold

ACCURATE AND PROFICIENT PISTOLERO Nicolo Medina pulled off a stunning victory in the air gun event to defend Asian Shooting Association Taiwan's championships in Bangkok.

Showing the result of her rigorous training under the Philippine National Shooting Association's youth development program, Medina nailed the 50-meter women's rifle prone event.

Medina registered 202 points to beat Malaysia's Nor Farrah Syahirah (576) and Hui Ayuna Mokhtar (574) in the gold.

The Philippines also took four silver medals with Rhamin Lyn Gonzales winning two. Gonzales also joined forces with Nikki Ho(5th and Shannon Chuatoco for two more silvers.

Gonzales tallied 594(8 to finish second behind Malaysia's Wahida Ismail (592.8) to the 25-meter 3-man junior pistol. Gonzales' other silver came in the 25m junior pistol in the Thailand Open where she scored 583 and landed second to Thai Chanyanid Rakbamrung.

The trio of Gonzales, Padilla and Chuatoco garnered the silver medals in both 3-man junior and Thailand Open events.

Cedrik F. Tupaz

Can Miguel Cotto also do the rock 'n' roll?

BARE EYE

Ricardo Trinidad

RIGHT NOW, HE CANNOT EVEN SUMMON enough courage to say how much he weighs. But Miguel Cotto should also be asked if he would dare rock 'n' roll with Manny Pacquiao in Las Vegas.

We, our Cotto, the reigning WBO welterweight champion from Puerto Rico, jump up and boogie right at the first bell?

A fellow must succumbed to the great Freddie Roach.

It's part of Roach's main plot to get Cotto surprised on fronterhood.

"We want him to go crazy right in the first round," Roach told acclaimed writer recently.

* * *

Will Cotto do a rumba-dazzle machine to catch the drop?

No comment.

Will Cotto do a slow and leisured waltz against the legendary Filipino speedster?

No comment.

Closely slightened, Cotto instead shot back him and would reasoned his pounding sure per round has not waned.

The veteran has gone up from 45 to 60 shots, an increase of 20 shots, every three minutes of action.

* * *

That, of course, is insignificant considering that it's no longer always possible to keep an accurate score of the lightning punches Pacquiao throws unchecked.

Meanwhile, there are other members who seem to continue to pile the odds in Pacquiao favor.

There is the jiggling jinks Cotto has had to suffer in contending against the weighing scales.

Fine will inevitably be aggravated by a horrific overnight committed by members of Team Cotto after they bragged about the supposed punch-out of the Puerto Rican champ.

* * *

Reports: Results versus Cotto stacked in a splatter-exchanger right on the first bell.

Unfortunately, Team Cotto has visibly manufactured this fourth bell.

We, we, it's dismissing enough that Cotto cannot even begin to reject, much more surpass, Pacquiao's speed.

However, if Cotto's handlers will bother to review their options, they're bound to realize that pounding speed is the last thing they will need in order to be truly competitive.

* * *

They'll be needing a lot of speed, too, on the Pacquiao brand of killer quickness.

Cotto, if there's still time, should instead obtain the necessary dance to avoid Pacquiao's blinding effectiveness.

The deadly dangers definitely lurk.

If Cotto allows himself to be sucked into the speed lane, he's sure to be confined.

Most pitiful dance a rumba left is sure against a rabbit.

* * *

In fact, the petrified step found Lou Dorsa has wounded the unsure summing:

"Fighting Pacquiao is like being caught in the center of a typhoon, there'll be a rain of shadowy punches everywhere."

But Floyd Mayweather Jr., who has had the chance to observe Pacquiao up close in his last outmatch) was over Ricky Hatton, offers an alternative.

Mayweather is reported to advise his heavy manager that he's available, a Little Joe Pacquiao. He's also not a very good boxer, he's nothing more than a pure slugger."

The message is clear: Cotto's only chance is to punch Pacquiao to do the work.

It's the only way the fight can drag into a deliberate master defense which owns a rush 'n' roll king can't be sure to dominate.

ACTION in the recent La Salle-Greenhills San Beda championship match of the Pasaveda NCR tournament won by the Greenies. Lascari's top junior Ben Iserhe is out today and tomorrow in the 2009 Mid-Year Career SBP-Pasaveda regional championship at Assumption-Parpanga. Hours: Carmel Bagtas, Mary Hill Lucena, Don Bosco Tarlac and Madrae Gonzo Pangasinan are competing in the 3rd of four-round Bagtas National HS, Dungon College and St. John Pangasinan are among the Pasaveda contenders.

Tough URCC tiffs Nov. 21

By Jane Manaoru

TWO SEASONED FIGHTERS AIM TO reclaim their old throne from a pair of excellently-conditioned foes in the Cult #5 Universal Reality Combat Championship to "Onslaught" on Nov. 21 at the World Trade Center in Pasay City.

Reigning URCC light heavyweight champion Carlo "Bad Boy" Barbosa Jr. of Bonifacio Militia is seeking to snatch the middleweight title of Jhang "The Mongolian Wall" Tai Soon of Black Tiger Clinic in a division Barbosa once held.

Barbosa, with a URCC record of seven wins, three losses and a draw, is up against an ex-foe in Soon, a heavily-favored veteran who has yet to suffer a loss in 11 international fights.

Ticket prices are pegged at P800, P500 and P1,000. For ticket inquiries, call Undefeated at 911-5555.

Mark "The Machine" Sangao of Libis Nilusha Wai to reclaim the bantam title lost from Jocelyn "The Onslaught" Cruz of Queen's Gate 33.

Barbosa, with a URCC record of seven wins, three losses and a draw, is up against an ex-foe in Soon, a heavily-favored veteran who has yet to suffer a loss in 11 international fights.

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Lito Vail O. Marcelo • Assistant Lito Corres S. Mariano

BUSINESS

Forex reserves hit all-time high of $43.2B

Remittances, gov't bond float boost GIR

By Michelle V. Rorro

THE COUNTRY HAS BECOME MORE LIQUID TO meet its foreign currency-denominated requirements such as imports and maturing debts as its gross international reserves hit a new historic high of $43.2 billion in October.

The reserves as of October were up from the end-September level of $42.3 billion. It was also higher than the $35.95 billion in October last year.

The GIR is the total foreign-currency reserves and gold holdings kept and managed by the central bank. It determines a country's ability to engage in commercial transactions with the rest of the world.

Monetary officials said the country's rising external liquidity was proof that it was less affected by the global economic turmoil.

The foreign exchange buffer of the country is largely buoyed by remittances coming from Filipinos working abroad, officials said. The sustained growth in remittances was making up for the drag in the GIR caused by shrinking exports, which turned around in the first year that saw the weak consumer demand worldwide caused by the global economic downturn.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said that for the month of October, the GIR was also boosted by inflows from the sale by the national government of $1 billion in bonds.

The GIR in October was also boosted by the increase in the price of gold in the world market. Of the reserves, $3.27 billion were accounted for by gold holdings.

According to the BSP, the latest amount of foreign exchange reserves was enough to cover for eight months' worth of imports.

Metro Pacific to issue ₱12B in 9-year debt notes

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www.pldc.ph

By Doris C. Dumlao

METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENTS CORP. IS raising ₱12 billion from the sale of nine-year debt notes to fund its acquisition from the Lopez family of additional shares in Manila Electric Co.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, MPIC said its board approved the issuance of fixed-rate corporate notes in one or more tranches to selected institutional investors. The notes will be backed by 10.65 billion Meralco shares equivalent to a 14.7-percent stake in the utility.

MPIC has mandated First Metro Investment Corp. and PNB Capital and Investment Corp. as joint lead managers and joint lead underwriters; Metrobank Trust as facility agent, paying agent and data service account agent, and PNB Trust Banking Group as collateral trustee.

Selling debt through corporate notes to institutional investors is generally a faster way of raising funds compared to a retail bond offer.

MPIC had snatched a ₱108-a-share buyout offer made by a group led by Henry Sy Jr. to the Lopezs' First Philippine Holdings Corp., which was selling half of its remaining stake in Meralco. The ₱322 billion transaction will bring up MPIC's interest in Meralco to 23.4 percent from 14.7 percent. The FLDT group, which is likewise led by First Pacific Co. Ltd. of Hong Kong, owns another 20 percent of Meralco.

With the combined MPIC and FLDT interest in Meralco to be raised to 43.4 percent, the group has cemented its position as the single-biggest voting block in the power retailer, which has been the darling of the stock market since the start of the year owing to the bidding war by rival corporate groups.

6th Bucheon City (Korea) Trade Fair in the Philippines

When: Nov. 10 (Tuesday) to 12 (Thursday)
Booth Open & Close : 10am - 8pm

Where: Glorietta Mall Activity Center, Makati City

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* Heat Mattress for Health
* Wheel Direction Indicator
*Blacksmith Hands Free
* Digital Saw Free
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China Bank profit surges 40.7%

CHINA BANKING Corp. posted a net profit of ₱5.31 billion in the first nine months, up 40.7 percent from a year ago, on double-digit expansion in interest earnings and income from treasury dealings and sale of foreclosed assets.

The country's ninth biggest bank by assets, which is majority controlled by tycoon Henry Sy, recorded a 35.53-percent return on equity and a 3.01-percent return on assets, among the highest in the local banking industry.

The bank's robust growth was driven by a 22.8-percent increase in revenues to ₱13.02 billion.

Net interest revenues from loan portfolio grew 26.6 percent, driven by stronger lending and improved margins arising from continued growth in low-cost deposits.

Non-interest revenues also surged 68.4 percent, boosted by higher trading and foreign exchange gains as well as revenues from the disposal of acquired assets.

The bank also improved its overall efficiency ratio as it spent more money for the largest branch expansion program in its 80-year history coupled with fresh investments in more automated teller machines and new technology platforms. China Bank now opens P0.86 branches to visit every 1%, lower than the 50 centers in the same period last year. — Doris C. Dumlao

Net profit of Globe up 12% to P9.9B in first nine months

By Doris C. Dumlao

GLOBE TELECOM YESTERDAY REPORTED a 12 percent growth in nine-month net profit to P9.9 billion on the back of a modest growth in service revenues from mobile, fixed line and broadband businesses.

Core net income—which excludes foreign exchange, mark-to-market gains and losses and other non-recurring items—was flat at P9.4 billion during the January to September period compared to last year.

Consolidated service revenues amounted to P40.9 billion, up 1 percent from last year. The strong performance of the broadband and fixed-line data businesses, which grew year on year by 69 percent and 22 percent, respectively, compensated for the lower revenues from the mobile and traditional landline segments.

Cash flow as measured by earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) stood at P27.6 billion for the nine-month period, 3 percent below last year's level. This translated to a lower Ebitda margin of 59 percent from 63 percent a year ago as the growth in operating expenses and subsidy outpaced the expansion in revenues.

The mobile business ended the period with 23.1 million subscribers, down from 23.7 million last year.

"While competition remains intense, we believe that we have the right strategies in further improve the competitive position of our mobile business," said Globe Telecom president Gilmore Ong.

The company's broadband business continued to gain momentum as subscriber base grew almost three-fold to over half a million subscribers, beating full-year expectations.

All broadband products posted record quarterly net additions, with fully mobile Internet service Globe Broadband Station leading the way. The robust subscriber growth has translated to a revenue impressionism of about P987 million or 69 percent from last year, closing the period with P1.2 billion in revenues.

In line with its thrust to generate value for its shareholders and consistent with its goal of optimizing its capital structure, the board of Globe Telecom also declared a special dividend of P50 a common share.

A total of P6.6 billion in dividends will be paid on Dec. 15.

PLDT sells satellite unit

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE Corp. is selling its communications satellite subsidiary Mabuhay Satellite Corp. (MSC) to Bermuda-based regional satellite operator Asia Broadcast Holdings Ltd.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, PLDT said its 67-percent-owned subsidiary MSC had signed several agreements with ABS involving the sale to the latter of "substantially all" of its assets, subject to the required regulatory approvals in the U.S.

The transactions involve the wholesale lease by ABS, which is led by Citigroup Venture Capital International (CVCI), of the Agila 2 satellite from MSC and upon the satisfaction of certain conditions, the purchase by ABS of the business of MSC.

But until such time that the conditions are met—including the conduct of satisfactory due diligence audit apart from government approvals—MSC under its current president Gabriel Demetrio will continue to operate and manage the business on behalf of ABS under an operations and management agreement.

MSC's Agila 2 satellite is a space station spacecraft launched in August 1997 with transponders or communication satellite channels covering Asia from before the Philippines, Japan to Indonesia and a satellite spot beam over Hawaii to provide connectivity to the U.S. It also has characteristics covering the region providing capacity for television distribution, direct-to-home broadcasting and VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal).

"MSC, while one of the youngest satellite operators in Asia, has been very progressive with its recent procurement of the ABS-1A and ABS-2 satellites as part of its fleet's expansion. We are happy with this acquisition, which leverages the satellite operations capabilities developed through the years by Mabuhay Satellite," Demetrio said.

"This will not only ensure future continuity of Mabuhay's Subic Space Center but will thrust it into growth as this facility is further expanded to support ABS' growing satellite operations needs," Demetrio said. Doris C. Dumlao

Forex . . .

From page B1

This was also nine times the country's short-term external debt based on original maturity and four times based on residual maturity.

Debts computed based on residual maturity are those with original maturities of one year or less, and those that have medium- to long-term issues but are about to fall due within the next 12 months.

Net international reserves, which is the GIR less debts to be paid within a year, amounted to $40.1 billion as of end-October.

Monetary officials said that given the country's comfortable external liquidity position, it need not borrow abroad just to increase the GIR.

Emerging economies were earlier encouraged by the International Monetary Fund to tap foreign borrowings if they needed to beef up their external liquidity positions.

Countries heavily reliant on exports and do not receive as much remittance inflows as the Philippines would tap the international capital markets to boost their GIRs.

Stocks dip . . .

From page B1

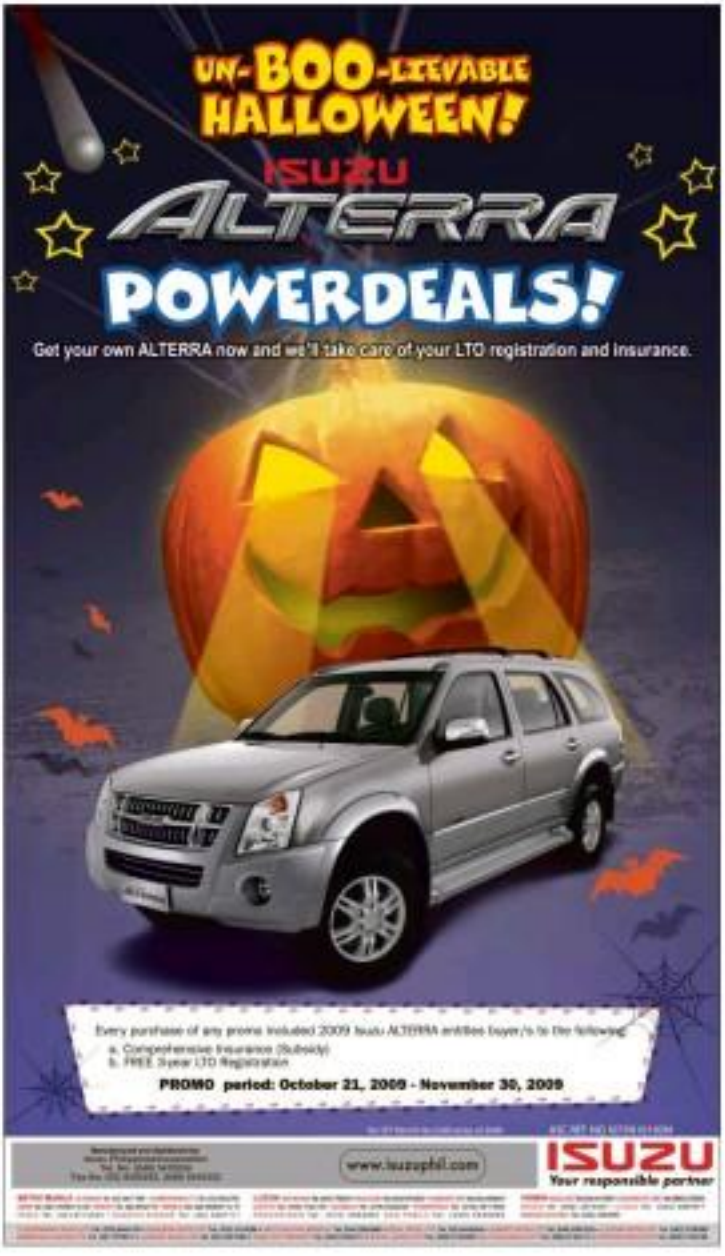
power utility Meralco changed hands, dealers said.

The composite index lost 15.04 points to 2,933.47 while the all-shares index fell 8.39 percent to 1,830.46 points.

A total of 3.89 billion shares worth P3.66 billion changed hands with gainers outnumbering losers 82 to 45, with 32 issues unchanged.

The local currency traded at 47.417 to the dollar.

"This is just a healthy correction for the market which has been going up for much of the week," said Jun Calaguas of Accord Capital Equities Inc. AFP



SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Mangaoang

Drug maker helps solve rising leptospirosis cases

By Charles E. Rohan

WITH REPORTED cases of leptospirosis surging close to 2,000—more than double last year's 769 cases—drug maker Pfizer has rushed the free distribution of antibiotic drug doxycycline so health authorities could contain the outbreak.

The bacterial disease that has already killed more than 130 people is particularly rampant in areas still recovering from last month's deadly floods brought about by the recent typhoons.

Thomas Lim, the emergency room of the Alabang drug maker Pfizer has coordinated with the Philippine College of Physicians, the Philippine Society of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases and the affected local government units to distribute the needed drug that will hopefully end this problem soon," reported Dr. Anthony Leachon, the company's medical director.

Since the outbreak of leptospirosis cases, Leachon reported that Pfizer has donated close to P4 million worth of medicines to aid stricken areas.

Majority of the drug donated were in Marikina, Taguig, Pasig, Cainta and Pateros, which were severely affected by typhoons "Ondoy," "Pepeng" and "Ramil."

Ongoing donation

"This is an ongoing thing for the company and we will not stop until this epidemic is eradicated," said Leachon who added that last month, the company has donated one million pieces worth of doxycycline to the Department of Health and P200,000 worth of medicines to the Philippine National Red Cross.

Doxycycline provides the greatest benefit when administered early in the infectious stage.

Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection caused by exposure to the urine of rats or other infected animals, in this case through floodwaters.

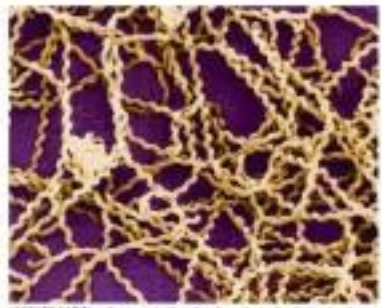
"The usual entry point for the bacteria includes damaged, abraided skin, particularly in the lower area and hands, eyes, nasal and oral mucous membranes," Leachon added.

Leachon explained that because leptospirosis' incubation period takes 14 days, the early signs that include high grade fever, severe muscle pain, yellowing of your eyes or skin (jaundice), dark yellow urine, and decrease in urine output are often mistakenly attributed to something else.

If not addressed early, leptospirosis could be fatal because the infection could lead to kidney, lung and heart failure, according to him.

London said leptospirosis bacteria is very responsive to antibiotics such as doxycycline. The drug is also a very effective preventive treatment against leptospirosis that is why it is given to people who have been exposed to the same source as an infected person.

"But to be more effective, antibiotic treatment should be started early in the disease," he reminded people showing the symptoms. He added that since the bacteria commonly infects rats, better sanitation, increased personal hygiene, screening of livestock and elimination of the animals' reservoir should be instituted to help reduce the incidence of the disease in the affected communities.



LEPTOSPIROSIS is a disease caused by spiral-shaped bacteria (above) that can have magnified hundred times).

Sleeping well for shift workers

THE SPIRIT is willing, but the flesh tends sleep.

HAVING A GOOD NIGHT'S REST IS still one of the best ways our body can recover from the stress and tear of daily stress. The best time to sleep is still during the night, especially between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Sleep during this time has a much higher rest value than other hours.

Unfortunately for some people, their work requires that they have to be fully awake during these hours. And usually these shift workers may not get the full rest we which their bodies need even if they sleep the whole day after work.

One time I had to assist an emergency call in the hospital in the early morning hours and I scrubbed a nurse for moving sluggishly while attending to the patient. I failed to realize that the poor nurse had been answering one call after another since 11 p.m. the previous night. She apologized for my perceived sluggishness of her actions, but later I had no apologies to her for not considering that her true body was already dying to her under the circumstances. The spirit was willing but the flesh needs to rest, too.

MEDICAL FILES

Rafael Castillo

Health impact

An article in the November issue of HR, [Health & Lifestyle] written by Nitin Elyas Baboolal stresses the health impact which sleep deprivation may have on shift workers. A handbook released by Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc. defines shift work as work that is scheduled outside "normal" daylight hours (i.e., from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.). It includes both long-term night shifts and work schedules in which employees change or rotate shifts. Due to nature of the occupation, many workers of healthcare providers, call center agents, factory employees and workers in other industries that require continuous services and production, 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

The toll on the workers' body can be quite significant. The considerable consequences of shift work can include disruption of the normal body clock, sleeping difficulties, easy fatigability. All these affect the health and well-being of the worker in the long term.

The Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School states that the greatest risk of disruption comes when changing from day work to night work. Many shift workers rotate their shifts, working some days and some nights, and have varying numbers of days off. Because of the disrupted working and sleeping schedules, sleep deprivation can be a major problem soon, during days they're supposed to be off from work. They may find it difficult to sleep such that they may spend the night watching television, playing video games, surfing the Internet, or chatting with other insomniacs.

Changing from one shift schedule to another oftentimes is disorienting to the body's internal clock. And it can be very confusing to the body. In this situation, the body is sending out signals to sleep during the night shift, making it difficult to stay alert, and sending out signals to stay awake during the day when the shift worker is trying to get some sleep.

Sleeping during daytime can never be the same as sleeping at night. Shift workers who sleep during daytime are particularly at risk of fatigue, because their day sleep is often lighter, shorter and more easily disturbed because of daytime noise and a natural reluctance to sleep during daylight.

This lack of quality sleep takes its toll on the worker's performance at work. If workers are fatigued, they are less alert, their reaction time is slower, they find it less easy to concentrate, and they may make ill-judged decisions. As a result, they may make more errors, which can lead to accidents and injuries. For hospital workers at close operating machinery, these errors can be fatally serious.

Improving quality of sleep

In Baboolal's HR1 article, the following pointers are given on shift workers to improve the quality of sleep:

- Make sure that family and friends do not more of and are considerate of the worker's sleep hours and needs.
- Ensure that you have a comfortable, quiet place to sleep during the day.
- Air-conditioning, telephone answering machine, blackout curtains and good blinds can improve the worker's sleep.
- Make time for quiet relaxation before bed to facilitate better sleeping (such as reading, breathing exercises and muscle relaxation techniques).
- Sleep on a set schedule to help regulate a worker's mood and to make sleep during the day easier.
- Avoid strenuous exercise before sleeping because your body's metabolism will remain elevated for several hours and this will make sleep difficult.
- If one does not fall asleep after 20 minutes, one should get up and read a book (some recall!) or music.
- If sleep still does not come, reschedule sleeping hours for later in the day.
- Does the consumer food supplements such as Sleepwell capsules or Melatonin-T may help improve the quality of sleep.

Well, with some adjustments, even shift workers can still have sweet dreams and a restful sleep.

15 shields vs the 'Big C'

By Tessa B. Salazar

MOST HEALTH EXPERTS NOW believe that cancer has become so widespread and prevalent that it can now be considered an "epidemic." Many treatments have been developed to meet the many types of the disease head-on, after its diagnosis with a patient.

But most many are aware that cancer can be prevented, and there are scientists that show a low incidence of the disease among their populations, particularly those that make pinto-based foods a major part of their diets.

Just recently, NaturalNews.com pointed to the naturally occurring foods that have cancer cells and, again, in studies to have proven more effective in the front-line defenses against and recurrence of cancer. These are:

1 Dihydroxyisoflavone (DIM). The growth-promoting activity of hormone-related estrogen (which can cause a variety of health issues) can be neutralized by eating cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, or by taking DIM supplements.

2 Curcumin (main potent source: turmeric), the active ingredient in the bright yellow spice called curcumin.

3 Epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG) is most often found in green tea. Scientists who attended the Global Viral Answers meeting program recently pointed out that decaffeinated green tea is a rich source of flavonoids known as catechins, which is able to slow or prevent the development of cancers in the colon, liver, breast and prostate cells. It is also a better substitute for coffee.

4 Genistein, an isoflavone found primarily in soybeans and traditional foods produced from them like tofu and miso.

5 Indole-3-carbinol (I3C) is an anti-cancer compound also found in broccoli and cabbage.

"Yes You Can Prevent and Control Cancer" by naturopathic doctor Christine Gonzales, and lecturers in the wellness program, also revealed the following items also help keep cancer at bay:

6 Garlic, which contains a number of compounds believed to slow or stop the growth of tumors.

7 Dark green leafy vegetables like romaine lettuce, mustard greens and chicory are rich sources of antioxidants called carotenoids.

8 Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and kale.

9 Beans, which contain phytochemicals, have been shown to prevent or slow genetic damage to cells.

10 Berries have one anticancer component or another, whether in strawberries and raspberries, and anthocyanosides (where in blueberries).

11 Flaxseed, nuts and seeds. Flaxseed contains phytoestrogens. Roasted nuts are almonds and walnuts.

12 Tea, which is rich in bioflavones, is said to prevent against bladder, cervix, lung and stomach cancer. However, one should also be wary of soy products containing preservatives and other chemicals.

13 Grapes, which contain a chemical called resveratrol, a potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent.

14 Tomatoes, which have an anti-cancer component called lycopene, recommended particularly in combating prostate cancer. It can also protect one against breast, lung, stomach and pancreatic cancer.

15 Whole grains which contain fiber, antioxidants and phytoestrogens.

A new African sea

DISCOVER

Hanssie Santos Ballon

AMID THE STORIES OF DRY riverbeds, water shortages and droughts in an eye-catching story about the disappearance of a new sea in a landlocked country.

Four years ago, torrential rains before the east African nation of Ethiopia triggered volcanic activity and began trying to split the continent. Over the course of a month in late 2009, more than 400 earthquakes, half of them with magnitude 3.6 or larger on the Richter scale, were centered on a rift roughly 60 kilometers long.

The rift is still growing, albeit very, very slowly. An international team of researchers led by Ataday Ayele of Ethiopia's Addis Ababa University and England's University of Leeds has now determined that the divide is actually the beginning of a sea.

Researchers are interested in the Ethiopian rift's development because the movement of the tectonic plates underneath what goes on at the bottom of the world's oceans, offering them a glimpse of what they haven't been able to look at in person before.

"The whole point of this study is to learn whether what is happening in Ethiopia is like what is happening at the bottom of the ocean where it's almost impossible for us to go," said University of Rochester research and study co-author Cindy Ebinger in a statement.

"We know that if we could establish that, then Ethiopia would essentially be a unique and superb ocean-ridge laboratory for us."

To understand what caused the rift in the first place, Ayele collected the 2008 seismic data from Ethiopia and its neighbor Eritrea and mapped the earthquakes in the region during the period. The analysis revealed that the 60-km rift's cause was more violent than expected, the tectonic plates moving far more quickly than had been previously expected.

To get a visual idea of the speed and force applied, take a suitcase or bag with double zippers on a single strip. Place the zipper in the center and then pull them apart in opposite directions as quickly as possible.

"We know that sea floor ridges are created by a similar formation of magma from a rift, but are never know their a huge length of the ridge could break open at once like this," Ebinger said. "Seafloor ridges are made up of sections, each of which can be hundreds of miles long. Because of this study, we now know that each one of those segments can tear open in a year a few days."

If the rift opened as researchers had thought slowly and in small increments over more years, changes would be less disruptive to the lives of those living in the affected areas. And at last check, Ethiopia's population is slightly smaller than that of the Philippines by a few million people, though the African nation has three times the land mass or a million square kilometers or 18,000 hectares.

The presence of a sea in Ethiopia may prove beneficial, although it will take millennium for the event to be completed. Right now, studies estimate that a tenth of Ethiopia is arable land, and less than two-thirds of a percent of that land is used for food crops. In comparison, almost 20 percent of the land in the Philippines is arable, and nearly 20 percent of the land is allocated for permanent crops.

The study was published online Oct. 26 in the journal Geophysical Research Letters.

E-mail the author at msanos@mb.edu.com.

PNOC-RC to invest in 11 hydropower projects

By Amy R. Remo

PNOC RENEWABLES CORP. plans to invest as much as P35.4 billion for 11 hydropower projects in Luzon and the Visayas, after the Department of Energy granted seven contracts to the state-run firm.

These projects are expected to generate a combined 376.2 megawatts (MW) of capacity, data from the DOE showed.

Since these projects are capital-intensive, and would thus require substantial investments, PNOC-RC pencilled with Huangpo R. said the company is currently seeking local and foreign investors for possible joint ventures or partnerships.

"Definitely, we will take on partners, either local or foreign. Although we assess the projects, we are a government corporation. The government actually owns corporations, so we will also welcome investors from the private sector," Mamaqui said.

He explained that the costs of these proposed projects were too high to be shouldered solely by the state-run firm. Already, several companies have indicated their interest in partnering with PNOC-RC, he added.

PNOC-RC's projects in Negros Occidental include the Pacoan-Guihulngan hydroelectric power (HEP) project in La Libertad, which is projected to generate some 10 MW in additional capacity for the island's Gilay HEP in Isabela with 11 MW; Sibulan HEP in Sibulan, 5.4 MW; and Bonbonog HEP in Sta. Catalina, 4.5 MW.

The company also has the Jalaur HEP in Calinog, Iloilo, which is expected to produce 17.8 MW of hydropower; Dalutan HEP in Kalibo, Aklan, with 2 MW; and Bob

BUSINESS

Public sector deficit sharply higher in Q1

National government's budget gap largely to blame, says finance chief

By Russel W Dacuyan

GOVERNMENT SPENDING BEYOND THE budget caused the public sector to incur a consolidated deficit of P47.3 billion in the first quarter, according to Finance Secretary Margarita B. Teves.

Teves said in a statement that the amount is equivalent to 2.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), or the total value of goods and services produced within the country during that period.

Teves then, the amount was just about half of the P97.02-billion deficit program for the public sector, which was equivalent to 5 percent of GDP.

Also, the consolidated public sector deficit from January to March was 561 percent higher than the P10.66 billion posted in the same period of 2008, which was 1.1 percent of GDP.

The entire public sector refers to the national government, local government units (LGUs), government financial institutions, social security institutions (SSIs) and state-run firms.

SSIs include the Government Service Insurance System, Social Security System and the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth).

"The substantial increase in the public sector's deficit was largely due to the higher than programmed deficit of the national government," Teves said.

In the first quarter, the government spent P139.7 billion more than its budget, overshooting the deficit target of P110.1 billion and more than double the P70.4 billion incurred in the yearago period.

"However, this was partially offset by the improved performance of the 54 monitored nonfinancial government corporations (MNFGCs), SSIs and local government units.

The 54 MNFGCs include the National Power Corp. (including National Transmission Co. and Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.), Philippine National Oil Co., Metropolitan Waterworks & Sewerage System, National Irrigation Administration, the National Development Co., Light Rail Transit Authority, Local Water Utilities Administration, National Electrification Administration, National Housing Authority, Philippine National Railways, Philippines Ports Authority, National Food Authority, Philippine Economic Zone Authority, and the Home Guaranty Corp.

The MNFGCs posted a surplus of P114.09 billion compared to the P12.77 billion during the same period last year, which was attributed to higher operating income during the period.

SSIs also reported a surplus of P20.4 billion, higher than last year's P14.45 billion, due to higher investment income on government securities.

Power co-ops receive loans from NEA worth ₱908M

By Amy R. Remo

THE STIMULUS NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION Administration has facilitated the release of P908 million in loans to 18 electric cooperatives in the first nine months of the year, through its Enhanced Lending Program, the agency said recently.

In a statement, NEA said the loans are expected to help electric cooperatives to be operationally strong and viable to ensure a competitive electricity industry.

NEA said it encourages the electric cooperatives to avail of its programs since the loans being offered have "competitive" annual interest rates of 9 percent per annum for loans that mature in over two years, and 8 percent for loans maturing in two years or less.

Other features of the program include exemption from charges for front loans; longer repayment periods; faster processing; the use of electronic fund transfer; lower minimum requirements; availability of assistance in the preparation of project feasibility study; and the availability of "personalized" service for the borrowers.

Electric cooperatives had availed of loans mainly for the rehabilitation and upgrading of their distribution systems, NEA added.

According to NEA, the cooperatives availed of P94.46 million worth of calamity loans for the rehabilitation of their distribution systems, which were damaged by typhoons "Cosme," "Frank," "Milo" and "Ondoy."

So-called Single-Digit System Loss (SSL) were also granted to 16 cooperatives to assist them in the reduction of their annual system losses by at least 1 percent yearly thus improving system reliability.

These loans were worth P168.58 million.

Among the activities for the reduction of system losses included the purchase of replacement of power transformers, meter pole clustering, rehabilitation of defective lines and replacement of defective kilowatt-hour meters; and the installation of grounding transformers gas circuit breakers, system power protection schemes.

Concerned loans worth P93 million were also given to the Camiguin Electric Cooperative for the construction of a 17-kilometer, 69-kilovolt sub-transmission line and the installation of a 14-megavolt ampere substation, while Lubang Electric Cooperative was granted P4.98 million for the rehabilitation of distribution lines, replacement of electric meters and the purchase of vehicles.

Meanwhile, 34 cooperatives were granted Rural Electrification Loans, among which is P80 million for Benguet Electric Cooperative for the extension of distribution lines to 306 municipal areas.

THE STRONG winds of Typhoon "Milenyo" back in 2006, did not damage The Columns Ayala Avenue which remained standing.

PROPERTY

Editor Cesar D. Manguerra

Are your buildings ready to rock?

by Yuen R. Salazar

AS AN ARCHIPELAGO SITting right smack in the seismically volatile Pacific Ring of Fire, the Philippines will undoubtedly receive its share of high-magnitude earthquakes. It should come as no surprise, then, that the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) recently announced the possible occurrence of a magnitude 7.2 earthquake in Metro Manila.

But does knowledge translate to action? Inquirer Property identified a number of major property developers in the metropo

AND B4-5

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Greenbelt Madison today's power address

It's easy to imagine yourself hosting a power party right away at your fully furnished Greenbelt Madison unit.

TO HAVE POWER IS TO POSSESS the capacity to control or direct change. Among the country's youthful movers, one idea, there is a select set of individuals who are endowed with this capacity—the ability to have an influence in the paths they have taken and make a difference.

Greenbelt Madison, the latest residential project in Legaspi Village from the country's top luxury condominium developer—Megaworld Corp.—has been inspired by the penchant for what is remarkable and extraordinary. It is no surprise that it is a fitting choice for Makati's movers and shakers.

Located on Salcedo Street at the heart of Legaspi Village, Greenbelt Madison is conveniently situated amid a high-profile area with neighbors such as the Ayalas and Sudans and business towering the street. Within walking distance is the country's most important financial hub being the next-door of Ayala Avenue and Paseo de Roxas. Important centers for healthcare and relaxation such as the Makati Medical Center and the Ayala Museum of Filipinos are not within the area.

But in spite of its proximity to centers of finance, diplomacy and medicine, Greenbelt Madison is designed as an oasis in the middle of a concrete jungle. With less than 300 units located within the 51-story tower, the development promises a rare haven of privacy to welcome you after a long, hard day at work.

The tower has a 32-meter lap pool for an energizing end-of-the-day swim and a gym for those who want to break for serious workouts. On the rooftop are landscaped gardens where you can do yoga in the morning. Those in the mood for some fresh air and brisk walking can go to the nearby Greenbelt Park.

Peace of mind

When it comes to security and privacy, Greenbelt Madison offers you everything so you can have peace of mind while away at work. From 24-hour security protected by smart and emergency power to sprinkler systems in all units, the condominium tower makes sure all other's important to its tenant is safe and secure.

Meanwhile each of the residential tower's units, with areas ranging from 50-sq.m. studios to 78-sq.m. two-bedroom suites, is carefully designed to address the needs of the young Makati professional who is determined to see his or her way to the top.

A 32-meter lap pool and kiddie pool are among the power amenities within Greenbelt Madison.

Each unit at Greenbelt Madison is already fitted with cabinet systems and appliances in the kitchen, dining, living and bedroom. Furniture and luxurious bathrooms. This means you can readily move in, uncork the champagne for your housewarming and get down to party.

But what would all your work mean if you do not have time to enjoy? Greenbelt Madison puts you at-close to Makati's entertainment and culture scene. A stone's throw away is Greenbelt, the most spectacular retail center in the country.

World's great cuisine

Dozens of great restaurants dot the small streets of Legaspi Village and represent the great cuisine of the world from Thai and Indian to Japanese and Filipino. On Sundays there is the opportunity to visit Legaspi Park where you can enjoy the expressive displays of Filipino theatrical talent at Onthego in Greenbelt. Further afield on Paseo de Roxas are the country's finest galleries while the Bachelors and Ayala museums are all minutes away.

So for those who know what to make of their talents and want to make a mark in society, Greenbelt Madison is the perfect address. It puts you closer to the action but at the same time provides the comfort of home where you can rejuvenate so you can face all the challenges that tomorrow might bring.

Young executives, entrepreneurs and investors are among the power elite who can lay claim to Greenbelt Madison.

Marquinton a flourishing community

THE FIELD GROWING AND increasingly discriminating property market is in economic, satellite of needs of the discerning home. Truly offering on the one hand, is the convenience and security that in-city condominium living offers. On the flip side, the enduring charm and comfort of a tranquil suburban backdrop is also equally appealing.

Those in the sensitive issues of cost and quality and you have a dizzying dilemma that, despite the numerous projects available today, further complicates the buyer's selection process.

Property development giant Federal Land Inc. addresses all these concerns in one stroke with the Spanish inspired Marquinton Garden Terraces (MGT).

Second phase

Set on a one-hectare spread on Batasang Highway right at the very heart of progressive Marikina City, Marquinton Garden Terraces is the second phase of a master-planned mixed-use community that includes the neighboring Greenmeadows Marquinton Residences.

MGT answers the clamor for the condominium lifestyle among the increasingly moneyed set of settlers in Metro Manila's eastern district, envisioned to be composed of nine high-rise buildings. MGT is a gated enclave that promises homeowners an ideal dwelling community typified by quality living spaces and superior amenities, tastefully interspersed with lush landscapes and wide-open spaces.

The condominium units boast the same quality and craftsmanship that has distinguished Federal Land as developer and property manager for over 50 years.

The ingeniously designed units feature spacious living and dining areas, bedrooms with closet space provision, kitchen base cabinet with granite countertop, toilet and bath with pedestal lavatory series, chrome and faucet valves. There is also provision for cable and telephone lines, as well as for window-type air-conditioning units.

Outside their living spaces, MGT residents have at their convenience luxurious add-ons such as children and adult swimming pools, a fully equipped gym, basketball and tennis courts, a two-story central clubhouse, a game room, reading room/library, a jogging path, biking trail, and picnic areas.

MARQUINTON Garden Terraces provides luxurious add-ons, such as those children and adult swimming pools.

SHOWBUILT designed units at the Marquinton Garden Terraces feature spacious living and dining room areas.

Prime location

Another big plus that makes MGT a wise investment is its absolutely prime location. Conveniently accessible to the capital of the suffocating vibe of the big city, it is carved (before easily) accessible to and from the major business and commercial hubs of Quezon City, Pasig and Makati. The property at Marikina surrounded by key establishments such as Robinsons Supermarket, The Blue Wave Marikina Mall, Amang Rodriguez Medical Center and the Marikina Valley Medical Center.

Discover this flourishing community at The Marquinton Garden Terraces by Federal Land. Visit its showroom on Sumulong Highway.

54-STORY ONE CORPORATE CENTRE

An inspiring landmark in Ortigas

IN THE BUSTLING ORTIGAS CENTRAL Business District, a magnificent tower has risen. Boldly designed using superior materials and advanced construction techniques, the 54-story One Corporate Center promises one of the most modern high-rise office developments in the Philippines to date.

With its geometrically rounded facade, the circular-shaped building appears to roam, here and its people see it from different angles it almost looks as if it were three different buildings all of sizes. The thick and thin lines of the building profile and gleaming blue reflective glass make it seem like a fine-lyne jewel set in the heart of society.

Designed by the renowned Philip H. Stern Architects, the building is one of the tallest and biggest in the Philippines. Invariably, all eyes are directed to it as it is one of the new landmark strategically located at the corner of Doña Julia Vargas and Meralco avenues.

At first glance, most architects would immediately consider a radial plan for the site, rather be in order to maximize the floor area of this exciting commercial. At, having a radial plan would result in a lot of wasted space and inefficient interior circulation.

Design strategy

Architect Philip Stern, the building's designer and 2008 Professional of the Year awardee, said: "The strategy we applied was to overlay a rectangular grid layout on a circular footprint. This allows for maximum space utilization without compromising the efficiency of the building circulation." Thus, the layout of the One Corporate Center is a clever solution to a specific site condition.

Although the lot has a very wide frontage as it is situated on a corner, but only a small part of it can be used for vehicular access because of the adjacent flyover ramp. "We therefore had to devise a design strategy that would allow effective access from the front and rear of the building and one that would also present a grand entrance for the building," Stern said.

That resulted to a unique design solution that includes an uneven driveway through the ground level of the building, connecting to Jade Drive at the rear, with a cutaway for dropping off and picking up of people at the middle.

From this impressive drop-off point, visitors are directed to a dramatic 3-story high lobby which is clad in granite for the walls, limestone for the columns and floors, and blue columns and wood veneer for the roof wall. The entire lobby gleams in the brilliance of natural light streaming in from the full glass curtain walls.

True masterpiece

One Corporate Center rouses 200 metres above ground, making it a magnificent spectacle to behold from all directions. It also has 9 efficiently designed parking basements and 7 commercial floors for leisurely shopping. The exterior is clad in imported solar reflective anodized glass curtain walls and aluminum composite panels.

To provide the most specialized design that maximizes building utilities, the building is comprised of an all-office occupancy with a gross floor area of 137,000 square meters, with typical office units in floor sizes of 2,300, 1,000 or 500 sq.m. all of which include their own air-conditioning control zones.

All these design considerations contribute to an inspiring experience that encourages positive attitudes and promotes general well-being, making the One Corporate Center a true masterpiece of modern architecture.

THE TERRACES rooftop of the 54-story One Corporate Center allows for three spectacular penthouse levels.

Are your buildings ready to rock?

From page B2-1

ily and asked them the "earthquaking" question. Are their projects prepared for the Big One?

Baltimore Land Corp. replied that its buildings were designed to be earthquake-resistant.

"This is the parameter of our structural engineers. Earthquake-resistant buildings are buildings that have been designed to adapt to seismic forces. Cyrus developed and build earthquake-proof (without fault-type)," says architect Henry C. Yap, general manager of RLC's office buildings division. He also stressed that their buildings are also designed to consider other environmental impacts such as strong winds.

Most RLC condominium buildings are high-rises, in clusters, with a smattering of mid-rise projects such as Wanderlife Residences, Vimana, Wellington and One.

Luxury condo

Last week, RLC launched the 28-story premium luxury condominium Lafayette Parkhills, to rise at the corner of E. Rodriguez and Aurora Blvds. in Makati. RLC Senior Vice President for sales and marketing Raoul E. Limtoc says this would be the first ever residential development of Robinsons Land in Makati.

They adds that structural engineers are required to incorporate seismic design considerations in mandated by the Philippine Structural Code. They can also use international codes (Uniform Building Code) or other parameters. Regardless of the code that they use, they are required to consider factors such as the location of the project in relation to earthquake "zones," the frequency of seismic activity, and site conditions such as soil quality.

"Building and construction are much more complicated than there are forces of nature to be considered," says Dante M. Abando, president of Alveo Land (an Ayala Land subsidiary).

Withstand strong quakes

Explaining how wind, fire, water and earth are considered in all its developments, Abando "How to Build against (the Forces of Nature)" notes tolerance, elements that the company adhered to the universal building code and national structural code of the Philippines, and as such its projects' infrastructure can withstand strong earthquakes. Among other technologies and elements, Alveo employs the construction of reinforced concrete walls.

"This design makes our condo buildings a very stable structures. Structural integrity is a primary concern and to this effect we employ engineers aligned with international standards and are the first and only triple-ISO-certified developer in the country," he says.

According to him, unlike a conventionally built structure that relies on a number of columns and beams for support, all their walls (except for the façade and bathrooms) are load-bearing, thus making the structure very stiff and rigid.

"We also pay close attention to soil conditions and ensure that soil tests even during site evaluation stage. We design our foundations based on the soil test results to make sure the structural design takes into consideration every aspect of the site conditions," Orbeta adds.

2 new BPO . . .

From page B4-1

well," Villegas described.

The new development, according to Villegas, stems from the synergy of the SLI's Office Building unit Commercial Center Division.

"SLI's pioneering efforts in integrating BPO office spaces in its shopping mall developments has now made the company a driving force in the industry and the main destination of BPO users that offers a total live-work-play environment," Villegas said.

She added that with its pioneering strategy of adopting the mixed-use development by incorporating office spaces in or near shopping mall developments, SLI has now become the landlord of about of any BPO players in the country.

Robinsons Cyberspace Cebu reinforces the province's dynamics as a dynamic BPO hotspot.

In fact, Cebu recently dominated as a top spot in the latest Global Services and Location Survey on the Top 50 "emerging global outsourcing destinations" worldwide, which based its ranking on scale and quality of workforce, business catalysts, risk profile, cost and quality of life.

"This only means that the blend of cultural, recreational and business values that Cebu offers will only enhance the image of Robinsons Cyberspace Cebu among global investors," she said.

BPO companies based in Cebu currently employ 38,000 staff.

2 new BPO destinations revealed

By Charlee E. Bulan

With the country's business process outsourcing industry's projected growth of 20 to 25 percent this year—translating to $7.3 to $7.5 billion revenue—property developers are all out to make the Philippines 'revenues' preferred site for offshore operations.

Ronnie Custodio Villegas, corporate public relations manager for Robinsons Land, noted that leading companies around the world have realized that offshore BPO is a key strategy for keeping up with stiffer global competition.

"The Philippines' attractiveness as a BPO destination is no longer limited in cost reduction but also the country's ability to provide global partners with human resource having the right set of skills and presence of specialized infrastructure that caters to their business requirements," Villegas explained.

She revealed that for its part, Robinsons Land Corp. has provided a number of properties targeting these investors, the most recent being Robinsons Ortiz in Paco, Manila and Robinsons Cybergate in Cebu.

Robinsons Ortiz is situated on Pan Villena corner Gumamela Streets in Paco.

THE FACILITIES offered at Robinsons Cybergate Cebu make it an attractive target of BPO firms

Support establishments

"There are food outlets, a bank store, service shops, spas and salons, computer center hardware and software, Supermarket, IT appliance and Handyman Do-It-Best that offer a wide spread of choices that serves to support the office spaces located at the upper levels of the mall," she described.

Featuring its own lobby and having direct access via passenger elevators to the basement parking, the Pera-serviced mall is equipped with 24/7 utility provisions and redundant power capacities.

"Robinsons Ortiz is well integrated to suit the unique lifestyle and work routines of BPOs and call center professionals," Villegas said.

She added that its tenants will not have a hard time recruiting staff because the property is close to the University belt where world-class like University of the East, Far Eastern University, University of Santo Tomas and Technological Institute of the Philippines are located.

"It should be interesting to note that Pasay City district is also a short distance from the Taft Avenue where Philippine Christian University, Philippine Women's University, Dalta College, Philippine Normal University and Sta. Catalina College are located. In short, a company would not run out of talented staff," said Villegas.

Expanding

Not only in Metro Manila, Villegas said RLC is also expanding to develop more responsive BPO spaces in other parts of the country.

"As the global BPO industry continues to expand in the Philippines, RLC is pushing it self to develop both office buildings and mall developments throughout the country. It is also hopeful that this bold move will echo the growth in other industries in the localities where its developments will rise.

Robinsons Cybergate Cebu is just one proof of this development.

Located adjacent to Fuente Osmeña, it boasts of a 24/7 facility, state-of-the-art communications technology and infrastructure, redundant power capabilities and roofing capacity.

The seven-level development is well integrated to suit the unique lifestyle and work routines of call center professionals.

"The ground and second levels will house restaurants, drugstore, convenience store, bank and retail components while the next two levels will offer wellness centers, SOHO and call center spaces still far from BPA to seventh levels. There will be two basement floors for parking spaces to

ROBINSONS Ortiz in Paco, Manila

| NEXT ⊙ |

Royale Homes Celebrates 15 Years

Posh amenities abound at Manhattan Heights

PROPERTY

Weatherization and adaptation to climate change

WEATHERIZATION means adaptation of buildings to the impacts of climate change like this heat vent that may soon be a regular feature of many homes in flooded areas.

Conclusion

THE RECENT UNPRECEDENTED FLOODING raised discussions as to what caused the floods and we blame the garbage, informal settlers, climate change and overpopulation in the National Capital Region or NCR.

One solution made was to relocate some informal settlers along the waterways to La guna. That is just as tariff since population density in NCR of 16,000 per square kilometer is double the density of Singapore. Our other Asian neighbors have a much lesser population density. Kuala Lumpur has 2,750/sq km, Bangkok 6,450/sq km, Tokyo 4,750/sq km., Hong Kong 7,000/sq km.

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amanda de Jesus

Climate change contribution

Furthermore, only 10 percent of our 10 million population in NCR is accommodated daily in the mass transport system as the LRT and MRT. Since the average Filipino is 21 years old (the average French is 37 years old), so much human mobility relies on buses, jeepneys and cars.

The sad result is severe clogged traffic arteries traffic and a very high level of carbon emissions.

Manila contributes a lot to climate change.

Luckily just south of Manila, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) with the second highest population density in the country has only 680/sq/km. South of Manila, Central Luzon with the fourth highest population density has only 490/sq/km.

Indeed, what we need is more infrastructure development to entice industry to move to outlying provinces once Manila and good transportation links.

Our healthy human population is definitely a prime resource in this world's emerging markets.

The Earth's carrying capacity

What our generation has to control is our voracious appetite for material goods. It was written that the average woman has how many pairs of shoes? Imagine the effect on the depletion of our natural resources and on carbon emissions to extract raw materials, manufacture, transport, maintain and dispose these goods. That is what property magnates say on the carrying capacity of the planet.

There are many suggestions and proposals from the private and public sectors on how to minimize or handle future floods.

A few weeks after Ondoy, residents are climbing when they see it is not going back to their flooded homes. Aside from cleaning and disinfecting their homes, there are some other important considerations that must not be overlooked.

Structural damage

A top priority would be to check the foundation for damages like cracks and uneven settling. Some signs that the foundation has been damaged may be doors that refuse to close properly. It may also be shown by irregular gaps in the window frames and between wood and ceilings.

It is advisable to examine porch roofs and overhangs to be sure they will have all their supports.

For homes with wooden posts or frames, check the connection of the wood post with the concrete pedestal or footing. The traditional way to anchor the post is through a pair of steel brackets embedded in the concrete pedestal with bolts to hold the post in place. The steel bracket must be checked if it is rusty and the wooden posts if they are rotting. You must also check the integrity of floors, doors, staircases and windows.

Wood partitions and ceilings

It is not enough for wooden partitions and ceilings to be cleaned on the surface. Flood waters brought a lot of dirt and bacteria and mud cake, which have accumulated inside the wall panels and above the ceiling, that have to be removed. This may not always be easy to do considering the tight space inside the ceiling or the wall panels. Mold, bacteria and bugs breed in moist environment.

It would be best to demolish the ceiling and replace it entirely allowing dried mud inside the ceiling or wall panels to remain may jeopardize indoor air quality. Dried mud with all its attendant microorganisms will pollute the indoor air in the house for many years to come.

Re-comments or inquiries, e-mail amadedejesus@gmail.com.

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2bU LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sinson San Juan
Interactive Editor Pam Pastor

Love your own!

Bea Soriano, Jasmine Maierhofer, Natasha Bautista explain why Filipina models click

(FROM left) Natasha, Jasmine and Bea represent the future of Filipino models.

WITH THE WAVE OF BRAZILIAN MODELS hitting the Philippines, I wonder how I'll [illegible] doing in the modeling industry. So I sat down with three emerging models.

Bea Soriano, Natasha Bautista, and Jasmine Maierhofer arrived on time for this interview. They are classmates with distinct Pinay features and that certain je ne sais quoi or morals. They were poised and well-behaved.

Bea Soriano, who is quickly becoming one of the Philippines' sought after models, says the modeling industry is very competitive, a view shared by Jasmine and Natasha.

"The modeling industry is competitive, but in a way that is healthy since I am motivated to be better and to improve on myself even in aspects outside of modeling," Soriano says.

LOVE YOUR OWN! C2

INSIDE
Indie is the new sexy
Meet the Glitter Girls
Online shop to go-to-gown gems...quirky stuff
p-C2

Young designers bring back the '80s

By Carmencita Sinson
Contributor

Soft fabrics, right sheen under the disco ball, eye on the shoulders

CLAD given inspired by the '80's with bold shoulders and sequins by Tonee Jimenez

BRINGS WITH nostalgia, these women's silhouettes are modern reinterpretations reminiscent of '80s fashion, with hints of the '70s. Fabrics include young ladies, and chiffon, with textures providing just the right sheen for a night under a disco ball.

Slightly veering away from the body-con phenomenon, designers such as Martin Bautista, Gregoy Herrera, and Tonee Jimenez take the focus of interest away from the waist to a beautiful play on the shoulders, the neckline, and the back.

Martin Bautista

"My collection is called Nova," says Bautista. "It's named after a Roman persona who was passionate about Greek culture and lived in great luxury. Nova is also Italian for black, which is my color of choice for this collection."

Martin says he wanted his collection to be "sexy, youthful, and gothic—in a new way."

Though the collection is dark and edgy, it is softened by the use of lightweight fabrics such as jersey.

Peplos and satin, some constructed, exquisitely detailed with corsets, dangerously dipped necklines, and thigh-high slits paired with leather accessories—also make for statement yet seductive take on Spring/Summer fashion.

About his collection, delightfully elegant and still wearable, Martin says, "I am inspired by real women. I think fashion should be realistic, practical and true. Fashion for me is like language—it should be something that everyone can understand and relate to."

Gregoy Herrera

"Someone who is confident and not only appreciates style but is also willing to experiment with one," is how Gregoy defines the woman who wears his creations.

His collection consists of variations on a white dress (might [illegible] gossamer dress, one with wide diamond cutouts at the back and another one in a mermaid cut, short dress, and some ensembles of

YOUNG C2

Love your own!

ONLINE

Meet the Glitter Girls

By Kaz Cruz

BLACK zipper "Pieces Play" blazer, P2,995

PEACH lace-and-fringe skirt

BLACK lace-with-blue-satin-and-tulle number by "Doll Tower" tube dress

WHAT'S IN A NAME: "We wanted the brand to represent clothes that depict a certain fun-clusiveness for celebrities, parties, shows and other social gatherings," Irina shares. "[Glitters], do-mestic goddesses like the lady beside us or people in general in their business or some other glamorous activity," we just the perfect name for it."

Humble beginnings: What began as a frequent collection of food coma, cocktail dresses and jumpsuits almost a year ago was fit to ogle-ut by the pair's beauty devotion to clothing. "We get a different high from dressing up," says Irina. "We love our clothes but loved them even more when we added some design talk to it like style, toppers or chains. From that, we decided to create a small online shop that would cater to girls like us who love clothes that are a little bit exaggerated."

Social philosophy: "My character is that there were too many basic clothes available in retail, but there was a scarcity of mind-out pieces," says it., "It's Glitters!'s aim to offer you the top, fantastic and exuberant clothes that are sure to get someone noticed in a crowd."

Where to find them (here, shop@brand, mobi/ply.com)

Design aesthetics: It's so conscious to go crazy on fierce pieces with a hint of current trends. "Glitters! is neither ordinary nor plain, it's one-of-a-kind, special-occasion clothing to wear on nights out, and is a vivid reflection of our own style," quips Nita.

Behind the scenes: The two ladies are also in search for the latest shopping craziness of John Galliano for Christian Dior, Vivienne Westwood, Betsey Johnson, Ricardo Tisci for Givenchy, Martin Margiela, Alexander Wang, Rodarte, Christian Lyon, Viktor & Rolf, and Christopher Deweese for Balmain. "We also love the classic inexpressiveness of fashion bloggers Aine Aldrige of www.seaofshoes.com, Kathi of wwwlovefashionnow.com," adds it.

Load up: Bring big bars of bullet when they were young, the brand has since said cutie pieces that are reinvented in every collection. "There's nothing more celebratory (and princess-y) than a full tulle skirt. In fact, most of our clients have commented that they've been searching for the perfect party skirt for a long time and they found it in our store," claims Nita.

Looking ahead: Already on their sixth collection in a span of 10 months, the girls will go for more luxury variety and attitude as the dominant theme of new collections until the end of the year. Plus, an added line of trendy clothes to do-date kids, day pieces together and a fabric line to complement the current summer's collection.

Price range: Skirts go for P800 to P1,400, cocktail frocks at P1,295 to P2,995, and gowns and formal pieces from P3,500 up.

'We offer over-the-top, feminine and exuberant clothes that are sure to get someone noticed in a crowd'

MAKING: Manila glitter-ti Ij Ladrido and Nina Evasco

ERRATUM

Yesterday's issue carried a feature story on Citi credit cards and its ongoing Pay with Points promotion at Makati Shangri-La. The hotel's General Manager should have been identified as Reto Klauser. Meanwhile, the Instant Citi Rewards promotion at Makati Shangri-la will run until April 30, 2010, while the Dine for Free offer is valid until December 15, 2009. For more information, log on to www.citibank.com.ph.

MUSIC

Listen up

'(500) Days of Summer' soundtrack

By Ronna Capili

"(500) Days Of Summer" the movie would not have achieved its mood without the carefully selected 33 tracks composing its soundtrack. It's no surprise that the film is driven by music, directed by music video and short film director Marc Webb. Getting music for the quirky film of Americans duo from the late '90s ("Girl & Guitars), to an English rock band in the '80s ("The Smiths"), and more recent acts such as Regina Spektor, The Temper Trap, Regional Grown, Motion City, and of course the Us (Black Lips!), makes for a soundtrack rich in alternative-rock music that is often moody about the topic of love.

The mix of new, like indie-crowd favorites Regina Spektor and Feist, with legendary Simon and Garfunkel, and French model-singer Carla Bruni, emphasizes the movie's responsibility to set the movie's offbeat tone amid Hollywood's romantic-comedy genre. Webb starting scenes and his ultimate counterpart.

Zooey Deschanel (her night enjoy aural treat to Sher & Hall's rendition of "Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want" and Deschanel singing "Sugar Town" cuts invisible through Nilsson.

(500) Days of Summer's soundtrack's beauty a that it does not just accompany the film, but is interwined in and defines the story. Additional tracks available with an iTunes purchase are Joseph Gordon-Levitt's "Here Comes Your Man" and "No Law" by Kevin Michael.

Young designers bring...

Veejay

Jeans brand makes history

By Kaz Ira Patiño
Contributor
Photos by Renee Capili

IT HAS BEEN 120 years since Levi Strauss & Co. manufactured its first pair of jeans—a great cause to celebrate. Where better to mark such a momentous event than the Main Arteries of the SM Mall of Asia?

Levi Makes History was the theme of the spectacle, but only was the affair organized to celebrate the 120th anniversary but also to commemorate the winning of Michelle "Tessy" de Asis of the Levi Makes History Female Story Competition. She was given a check for P40,000 for her "Levi's" story, which was voted by 30,000 voters from the Asia-Pacific.

The crowning signaled the start of the fashion show. Music and lights blared out from the stage while four models walked on wearing Levi denims, their bodies primed to make them look like sculptures.

Amazingly the flare below them started to rise to make four prehistoric cone-bra'ed models.

The lights grew brighter as a male model in swords and boots came swooping out from backstage. 63 male models, some only wearing jeans and boots, came soon after.

This portion of the show was to represent where Levi had begun—denim, denim jackets, and overalls.

Dare particular "model" caused an uproar of cheers from the crowd: Robin "Bad Boy" Padilla, decked out in denim jeans and jacket.

In the next portion, girls with pin-up hairstyles wore shorts and skirts. Plaid tops either tied or cut at the waist gave off a country feel.

The men wore saddle or Cuala style shirts and plaid shirts over various jeans. They sported combed back hair and glasses to give a retro vibe.

In the next portion, four dancers replaced the male/pinup models on the pedestals.

Neon lights, big sunglasses, fishnet stockings, headbands, and big bows accessorized the girly outfits.

Models, male and female, wore loose shirts in blue, pink, and purple under blazers, vests, and hoodies.

Phil Stubenhofal walked down the runway wearing a military hoodie over a mesh shirt with acid washed jeans and metallic boots. This signaled the transition from the '80s Flashdance look to the polar opposite punk aesthetic.

Military-inspired coats with gold chains and fringe

Inspired by the pin-up girls, flashdance, and a good dose of rock 'n' roll

epaulettes paired with dark denim jeans and the coolest boots, leather and trimmed brim clip on shavers, studded biker masks, ripped denim vests, ripped leg gaps, and bandage leotards—all in black—up paced on the runway.

To top the whole show, Padilla came back clad in a denim catwalk coat and jeans.

While all the models standing in the background, Padilla extended his hand and walked the catwalk as confetti fell.

Everyone cheered the 120th anniversary of Levi.

HEAVENLY A model with long hair for a subtle and young accessory.

'80s FLASHDANCE look, an ode to the Material Girl

Levi celebrates 120 years anniversary

'40s PIN-UP girl meets country girl chic

MODEL decked in chains, studs, and jewels.

Indie is the new sexy

By Renee Capili

A FULL HEAD OF DARK brown hair, thick long lashes accenting those blue gray eyes, a fashion sense without frills, and definite taste in music—Zooey Deschanel as Summer Finn in "(500) Days of Summer" could just be every guy's dream girl. If she isn't, then she's every girl's dream girl.

At the awake of the fun flick still, every adolescent girl in the theater has probably forgotten of Hollywood's scantily clad, booty shakin', sequin-wearing sirens, and instead up silently sighs for Deschanel's indie charm. Because shunning shoves, knee length skirts, and vintage inspired pieces are sexy too, especially when they're merely accessories to a carefree spirit.

Deschanel's choices of garb are more often than not, quite unique compared to her contemporaries, preferring modest silhouettes and headbands and rarely wearing tons of accessories. She keeps things simple, going for the underdressed rather than the overdressed style school of thought. At the 2009 Vanity Fair Oscar Party Deschanel wore a short sequined mini dress, but kept her hair down and finished the look with gray peep toes and a simple silver clutch, which showcased her casual persona.

While she favors feminine pieces, which are slightly reminiscent of 1950's fashion, her character Summer Finn from romantic vintage, haute pieces, mixed and matched her avant-ry of looks. Rather than having a closet full of clothes, Finn's style is maximizing what's on hand. Dig up A-line skirts and button downs in neutrals or basic colors like navy, and match them with a simple pair of ballet flats or low heeled pump-toe wedges.

But for what is the Deschanel or Finn fashion sense without the allure of her face? Thankfully, in this department, the look is simple as well. Wear your natural hair color with pride and just be sure to amp up or control the volume by using mousse of dark browns or black hair.

If you're feeling a bit adventurous (or in Zooey's case, free spirited), go some bangs, and don't be afraid to tie a ribbon on your ponytail or tie as a headband. Play up your eyes with volumizing black mascara (try YMV's Ooh-La-Lash! Volumizing Mascara, P1,000, clean less natural brows, and a bit of berry lip stain (The Face Shop's Powdery Real Tint in # 202 Cherry, P480) at peach blush and lipstick. If you want to go for the whole retro-nerdy, mess in some gray contact lenses.

See under the coverages and their hemlines of accessories and outfits and stand out in Deschanel's simple looks. Believe it or not, it's the more eye catching of all.

SUMMER Finn due-ses Tori Hansen-with her quirky style.

Steal '(500) Days of Summer's' Zooey Deschanel's quirky look

GET THE LOOK

ZOOEY'S signature vintage and feminine look

WHITE dress with ribbon print, Mango

BLUE top, Mango

SKIRT, Topshop

What they wore on All Hallow's Eve

By Kim Yao
Contributor
Photos by Raymund Mansilang and Kim Yao

OVER 2,000 PEOPLE MADE their way to The Fort to celebrate Halloween in "geek-a-licious" style.

Events came upon a cast of characters that only a costume party at the trendy opened Bonifacio could bring out. All Hallows' Eve was merely the beginning of the second coming.

After a two-month hiatus, the nightlife hungry were all set and not even Typhoon "Lando" could keep them from coming because really they did not come, come, and come in droves.

This year, the crowd injected flash and sparkle into their regalia as sequins, feathers, hats, and killer heels took center stage.

"Lady Gaga" lit up the dance floor with her dress slick while the "Phantom of the Opera" rocked to "The Music of the Night."

Infectious headgear was about the crowd as "Vegas showgirls" dazzled their way to the Dion "Sexy Boogy" and

SPOTTED

Ghosts and ghouls are out, Barbie and Tinker Bell are so IN

JOYCE Photon as Barbie and Jenny Pranaggad as Sassy Bossy

"Barbie" turned heads while dancing the night away.

Also spotted in full gear were Tim Yap as Edward Scissorhands and Encore's main man, Erik Cua, as Annie Potter's.

With Lil' Miss Miranda on the decks, the thousands in attendance had a wickedly spectacular night.

Mind out for the grand launch of Encore on Nov. 11.

"It is time to be yours, commitment, exactly yours..." — Edd as Phantom and Jenny Pranaggad as Christine of El Bimbo

"The Music of the Night of Expression [illegible]" — Mark G. as Phantom of the Opera

IAH Gallego, Encore events coordinator as Lady Gaga

KAT Dalusay

JAQ Sebing, undercover manager of Encore

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Battle of the broadbands

Some things you need to know before choosing the right portable broadband service for you

By Yatin Pang

WHEN I FIRST SAW ADS promoting portable wherever-wherever prepaid broadband services, my first thought was, "Where do I sign up?" For a self-confessed Internet addict like me, this was a must-have. Before running to the nearest service provider, I had already fantasized doing some fancy Internet machinations like some awesome, geeky lead girl.

Being a Globe subscriber, I figured the logical choice would be to go myself the Globe Broadband Tattoo prepaid kit. I went to a Globe Business center in Greenbelt 4, where all my questions were unhesitatingly left unanswered by a customer service representative who had obviously missed the Broadband 101 training. Still, this did not dissuade me from buying one, and I left the business center bemused.

The next day, at a studio shoot, I eagerly inserted my USB modem into my notebook, sat back and waited for the magic to happen. Nothing happened. I couldn't connect at all, and I felt like a kid with a toy balloon that had suddenly burst.

It was a good thing that I brought my unsuccessful kit to a different business center, this time at Park Square, where the extremely knowledgeable and friendly staff finally and gave me a quick rundown of everything I needed to know.

With my Tattoo now working, I began to indulge my third girl fantasies again. Except I apparently had too much expectations. There'd be times when my broadband service was a blessing, and times when it was a frustrating, teeth-gnashing curse. Since broadband modems are highly dependent on the service provider's cellular network coverage, they are very dependent on scope of coverage, something I learned belatedly.

I decided to delve a little further into the prepaid broadband world, and spent a day with the three current service providers. Globe Tattoo, Smart Bro, and Sun Cellular. Here are some things you need to know before choosing the right portable prepaid broadband service for you.

Kit and caboodle

The three modems pretty much look the same. It's a small, white rectangular device, no bigger than an empty pack of gum. Inside, there's a slot for a SIM card and another slot for a micro SD card so it can double-duty as a flash drive. The modems picks up three kinds of wireless speeds, UMTS which is the slowest, 3G and the fastest which is HSDPA. This is usually denoted in the color of the blinking light on your modem: A green light means UMTS, blue is for 3G, but the light we most is turquoise, which signifies HSDPA.

Globe – Globe's Prepaid Broadband Kit called "Tattoo" costs P895, comes preloaded with P100, good for five hours worth of Internet.

Smart – Smart Bro (short for broadband, but pronounced like the thing for the contraction of "brother") costs P995. It also comes preloaded with P100, also good for five hours of Internet.

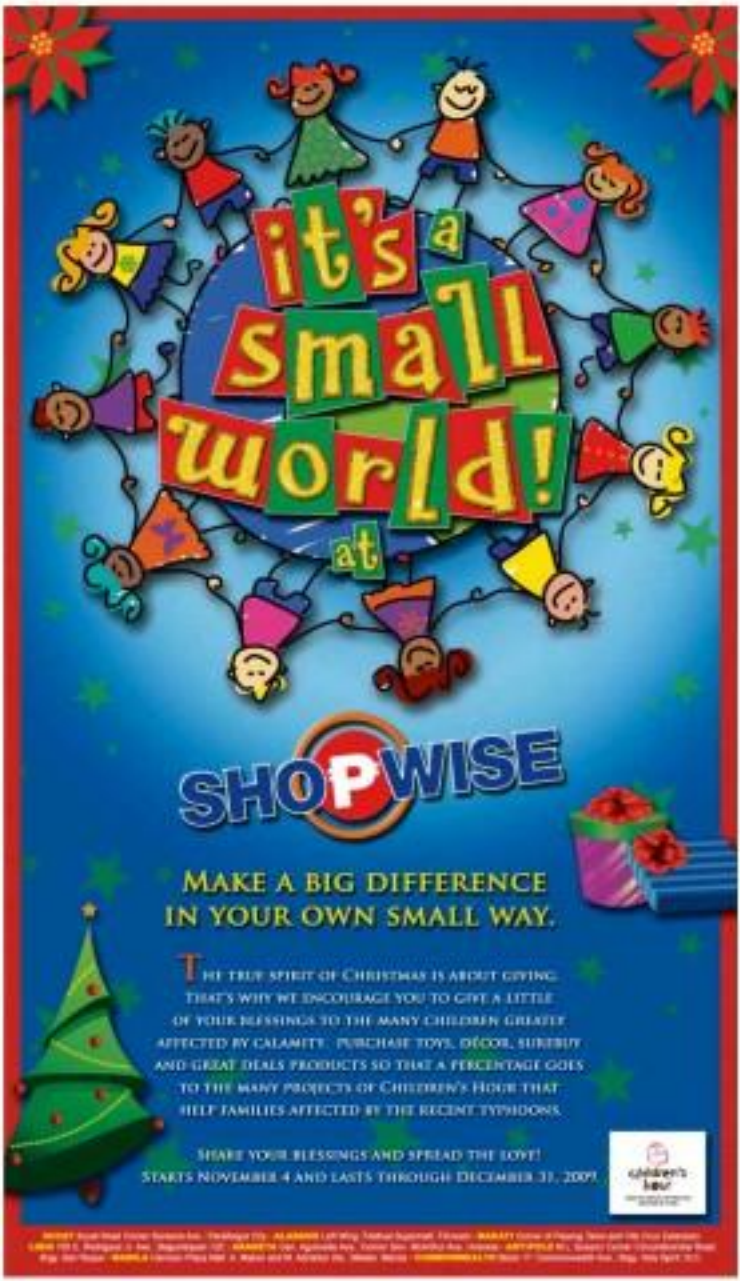
Sun – Sun's kit, P1,495, also comes with five hours free Internet, consumable within thirty days of first use.

Every minute counts

Prepaid broadband services are usually priced per minute or minute blocks, depending on the provider. In an effort to be competitive, they have some pretty wide, metric-babe pitching and interesting schemes.

Globe – Of the three, Globe has the most complex black-box scheme, charging you P5 for every 15 minutes of usage. USD per

NEXT PAGE



Battle of the broadbands

From page D1

hour). This is very handy if you tend to use the Internet for short bursts of activity at a time, say to check e-mail or Facebook. However, at the time, Globe is the most prone to unexplained minutes. Why? Simply put, the system charges you per minute. Which makes that per minute, no whether you're online for 59 minutes (59) for the first 15 minutes + 59 for the 1st minute of the next 15-minute block) or 30 minutes (2 15-minute blocks), you get charged P59 regardless of use.

Smart - Smart charges you P50 for a 30 minute block (60 P/20 per hour), but gives you the advantage of maximising your use. In case you log on and don't immediately consume the 30 minutes, Smart will allow you to reconnect within that 30 minute period and should you use all half, under that time frame, you will be only charged P50. More website has detailed examples. This is a great thing to have especially during times when your Internet signal is choppy and you get cut off and reconnect again, the charge remains P50.

Sun - Sun has the most flexible pricing and surfing schemes of the three, while offering a slightly lower rate. Using regular load, Sun charges P30 for 30 minutes, but gives you a two-hour window to consume the full 30 minutes (vs Smart's 30 minute period). Also, they offer broadband speed: it loading rarely which offer us, they offer broadband speed: it loading rarely which offer us, they offer broadband speed: it loading rarely which offer us

CELEBRITY MOMS CREATE THEIR OWN BABY COMPANY NURSERY ROOMS

Celebrity moms Sophia Ojeda-Lligo, Audrey Tan-Zubiri, Nancy Castiglione, Christine Bersola-Babao and Tessa Prieto-Valdes at Baby Company's event at The Podium

It was an afternoon of great Mommy talk and design when celebrity moms Audrey Tan-Zubiri, Christine Bersola-Babao, and Nancy Castiglione, joined host and interior designer Tessa Prieto-Valdes in designing their dream nursery rooms in Baby Company's Nursery Rooms by Celebrity Moms event held recently at The Podium.

As the Baby Specialist, Baby Company has a wonderful mix of furniture, accessories, linen, and toys for nurseries, and this event showcased the exciting possibilities.

The audience was given design ideas on how baby's nursery by Philippine Bcz cast of Interior Design professor Sophia Ojeda-Lligo, herself a mom to a three-year old son, and by the different nurseries showcased using items from Baby Company.

And the good news is that one lucky girl is chance to take part in the second leg of Baby Company's Nursery Rooms by Celebrity Moms event on Sunday, November 8, 2009 at 3PM at the SM Megamall Atrium. They will be able to see celebrity moms and their dream nurseries, and obtain some tips from design experts.

Baby Company's Nursery Rooms by Celebrity Moms event was in partnership with The Podium, SM Megamall, SM Department Store, and Our Home for the use of ARQ Curtains, armchairs, and accessories.

Tessa Prieto-Valdes with artist and muralist Omalyn Baron

AUDREY TAN ZUBIRI'S GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Audrey Tan-Zubiri, wife of Congressman Miguel Zubiri, combines design and practicality in designing her dream nursery. Now expecting her second baby, she opts for a neutral color scheme to give her more flexibility should the baby be a girl or boy. Audrey also gives importance to maximizing the nursery room's space with multi-purpose items, such as a changing table that doubles up as a bathtub and storage area.

Baby's or diaper changing table with bathtub and storage area.

Audrey's choice: a Chicco electronic cot mobile with soothing melodies, removable toys, and a night light.

NANCY CASTIGLIONE'S BABY BRIGHTS

Actress Nancy Castiglione simply loves her new role as the mom to twin boys. Her nursery bursts with energy starting from her use of bright primary colors, and on to its double function as a playroom for her boys. Nancy's active little boys have loads of fun with the set of Fisher-Price and play yards, stocking animal friends by Little Think, and puzzle mats she placed in their nursery.

Rocking puppy and horse ride-on toys for Nancy's twin boys.

SOPHIA OJEDA LLIGE'S BABY SOPHISTICATES

Philippine School of Interior Design professor Sophia Ojeda Lligé's nursery had a sophisticated edge with her play on the color scheme. Instead of staying pink with other parents, she combined this with chocolate brown for a fresh nursery look. She was also strong on safety tips as she was on design, urging moms to make sure their low-odor/non and lead-free paint and include plug protectors and bumper guards on their nursery most love list.

Comfortable reading chair for a mother

CHRISTINE BERSOLA BABAO'S BABY BLUES

TV celebrity Christine Bersola Babao prepared for her coming baby boy with a nursery with a blue color scheme. Baby Blissey beddings and a Disney night lamp adds a magical touch to her dream nursery.

Christine recommends placing a changing table and dresser right beside the crib for easier convenience. With this set-up, baby's essentials are within arms reach and moms can easily change baby's diaper.

Sophia's choice: A lightweight Maclaren bouncer to keep your baby girl comfortable and entertained.

A matching diaper bag for moms.

TESSA PRIETO VALDES'S CREATIVE NURSERIES

Interior designer and TV host Tessa Prieto-Valdes thrilled the audience by setting up not one but two nursery rooms, one for a baby girl and one for a boy. Tessa's nurseries were both fantastic, very personalized, and of course, whimsical. She advised Moms to get creative, and suggested that the rooms have a wall mural with artwork inspired by designs from crib beddings.

A select pink nursery room for baby girl: Bimbo Bello crib in natural tone, Dixon orbiter with rainforest animal friends character prints, nursery organizers, Chicco crib mobile and Fisher-Price rainforest open-top take-along swing.

Planes and trains for baby boys: Tessa chose a white and light blue color theme for her ideal baby boy's room. The little one will surely enjoy the Bimbo Bello crib in natural tone, Dixon orbiter with toy airplane prints, nursery organizers, Chicco crib mobile, blankie and pillow set, soft pillows and a ride-on train.

Graphics Design: Ruben Joshua Cardo

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Where to Stop Where to Go

2009 Mabuhay Awards Night at Dusit Thani Manila

The Association of Human Resources Managers in the Hospitality Industry (AHRM) will be presenting the 2009 Mabuhay Awards ceremonies at Dusit Thani Manila on Nov. 9. The Mabuhay Awards is an annual service excellence awards program in the hospitality industry with the best managers, supervisors, front of house and heart of house staff are honored. This year's major partners are the De La Salle College of St Benilde, School of Hotel and Restaurant Institution Management, Dusit Thani Manila, F&B World Magazine and the Philippine Daily Inquirer. Winners/order are the nominees by category.

Manager Category

Supervisor Category

Front of the House Category

Heart of the House Category

Marriott Hotel Manila offers 50% off on lunch and dinner buffet

DINE SEMPRINGS IN AN EXTRAordinary 5-star dining experience at the newly-opened Marriott Hotel Manila as Marriott Cafe offers a 50 percent discount on lunch and dinner buffet. Enjoy a scrumptious international meal from Marriott Cafe's buffet set-up consisting of Filipino, Italian, Chinese, Japanese and Western dishes at carefully prepared by seasoned and well-trained group of chefs. Make a major dining with Japanese through and through or go to the Italian section, or the Chinese area and don't forget to think about checking out the pasta and pizza at the Western side. Set only P675 net for adults and P337.5 for children between 7-12, this is absolutely worth every centavo.

Marriott Cafe is ideally located in the lobby Marriott Hotel Manila. It is 460.24 sqm, with a total seating capacity of 224 persons. Open daily from 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. offering breakfast, lunch and dinner buffet and available a la carte menu. The 50 percent discount is good Mondays to Fridays until Nov. 30.

Marriott Hotel Manila is located in Newport City, opposite NAIA 3 next door to Resorts World Manila. The Marriott has 3 superb restaurants, bars and lounges, 8 meetings rooms and a grand ballroom. It also features a superb Qiora Spa (opening mid-November) and offers splendid views of the adjacent Villamor Golf Course. For more information and reservations, call the hotel at 988-9999 or visit www.marriott.com/mnlmc.

Paid Commercial Feature Advertising

Peggy Angeles is the Hotelier of the Year

PEGGY ANGELES IS ONE OF SHANGRI-LA HOTELS and Resorts' vice president for sales and marketing. Although the corporate is headquartered in Hong Kong, Peggy is based in Manila. With over 23 years of experience in the hospitality industry in Asia Pacific, Angeles started her career in Hyatt International more she had stints with both the former Hyatt Services Singapore and Hyatt Regency Manila where she held various positions in sales and marketing and rooms division. After a decade with Hyatt, she joined the Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts as the pre-opening director for sales for the Edsa Shangri-La Manila - the first hotel of the Shangri-La Group in the Philippines, where she contributed significantly to the hotel's development since the pre-opening.

In her capacity as vice president for sales and marketing of the Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, Angeles has been responsible for the overall development and implementation of the corporate sales and marketing objectives, strategies and activities of the Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts in Australia, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar and Singapore, through direct supervision of the hotels, regional sales offices and national sales offices in their regions. Her 10 years experience with the Shangri-La Group has given her opportunities not only to work with the opening Shangri-La Hotels but also has been involved in the expansion and opening of the hotels and resorts in China, Middle East, India and the re-branding of two hotels in Australia, one in Sydney and the other in Cairns. Most recent hotel opening under her supervision were the Shangri-La Hotel Tokyo; and the Shangri-La Boracay Resort and Spa which simultaneously opened last March 2009. Forthcoming is the development at the Shangri-La Hotel at The Fort. In addition to her portfolio of hotels and regional/national sales offices - Peggy supervises the business development of the company's global accounts and has been appointed company champion for personnel development and training of the Shangri-La sales and marketing talents, and the development of the Traders Hotel brand.

She was actively involved and held key positions in various associations that foster the growth and development of the travel industry in the Philippines. Her more memorable stints include being part of ASEANTS board in the 90s and as one point, the private sector representative for the hotels in the PCSC board. Her impressive portfolio and rising career is widely recognized by the travel industry. For 2 consecutive years in 1998 and 1999, she was nominated as one of the Most Powerful Women in Travel by leading travel magazine, Travel Agent, a US-based publication.

The AHRM and The Mabuhay Awards

THE 2009 Mabuhay Awards committee members at work.

THE AHRM session committee, from left: Rose Manalo of the Pan Pacific Manila, Grace De Vera of the Peninsula Manila, Claire Delarmente of Diamond Hotel, Tony Fontanilla of the Century Park Hotel, Cosette Velasco (President) of the InterContinental Manila, Chay Balmaceda and Regelia Santos of the Dusit Thani Manila.

Hotel La Corona de Lipa
Hotel Gabriela de Vigan
Hotel Veranda
Rockwell Hotel
La Filipina Hotel & Restaurant
Hotel Arkiano
Hotel Cosmopolitan
Hotel Elizabeth
Hotel Rosa
The Fairways Palace Waterpark Resort & Spa
Isabela Garden Hotel
Isabela Royale Hotel & Suites
La Union Country Resort Hotel Inc.
Legazpi Hotel
The Lighthouse Marina Resort
Lucky Park Hotel
Mallberry Suites/Business Hotel
Marian Island Resort
Marian Cebu City Hotel
Mabolo Bay Resorts
The Mercy Place
Montebello Villa Hotel
Monterrey Villa
NEW HOTELS
My Hotel Davao
Negros Legend Hotel
Hope Regency Hotel
Oasis Hotel
Our Tagaytay Place Hotel Cebu
Ora Chorro Resort Hotel
Pine Hills Hotel
Plantation Bay Resort and Spa
Ormoc Villa Hotel
Plaza Cebu Suites Hotel & Residences
Pyramid Garden Beach Resort
The Pearl Farm Beach Resort
Hotel Porta Vita
Regency by Davao
The Royal Mandaya Hotel
RC Hotel
SM Grand Hotels
Seminole Hotel
San Antonio Resort
Sandoa Manor Hotel
Sogod Villa
Sea Garden Tower Hotel
Sarabia Hotel
Subic International Hotel
Subic Holiday Villas
Subic Park Hotel
Sunrise Holiday Mansion
Subic Bay Victoria Hotel
Summer Place Hotel
Tara's Mansion Hotel
Tall View Hotel
Hotel Tacos Juegos
Hotel Veneza
Villa Market Hotel & Resort
Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino
White House Beach Resort
White Rock Hotel
Dome
Museum Cafe
Max's Restaurant
Kenny Rogers Roasters
Chowking
Greenwich
Jollibee
Mang Inasal
Yabang Restaurant
Shakey's
Pizza Hut
Chicken Joy
Tokyo Tokyo
Tong Yang
Tao Chinese
Ling Nam
Pancake House
Cafe Breton
Cafe Ysabel
Cafe Adriatico
Cafe Laguna
Cafe Rizal
Cafe Ilang-Ilang
Cafe Juanita
Cafe Bola-Bola
Cafe Mediterranean

Avoiding the perils of mobile netizenship

Beware! Nifty mobile phone services don't come free

by Tein Yang

IT ISN'T UNUSUAL NOW TO have mobile phones that can check e-mail, surf the 'net, stream videos from YouTube and keep you connected to your social network addiction of choice.

However, these nifty services don't come for free. Lately I've had friends who joined Twitter, enjoyed the Ash self-updating and movies later, start ranting hysterically (from their computer now) about their astronomical phone bill. If this scenario sounds familiar, stop and smell your data plan before you blame the blue bird.

Here are a few things to help you make an informed decision:

Know thyself

First, you must know your Internet habits outside of your computer. When you are out and about, are you the type who still checks your YouTube fix or would you rather keep your videos downloaded for charging? This is important because this will be the basis of choosing your data plan.

Data plans are being offered in two different measurements: volume or length. In a perfect world, you would like to have both. Volume measures your data usage per kilobyte sent and received, while length measures the amount you spend on the Internet. In most cases, this is measured per fraction of an hour (e.g. 9/5 for 11 minutes).

Knowing this is very important because choosing the wrong data plan for your lifestyle may lead to one shocker of a bill.

Time is on your side

When the iPhone first made its official debut last year under Globe, everyone flocked to the launch to get their hands on the device. Those who had never been near capacitance on their phones before marveled at how great the iPhone was for surfing, and the speed was impressive, too.

A friend of mine was showing off how neat his phone was until I asked him if he had already switched his postpaid line over or to time browsing. He looked at me blankly and I explained to him that as a default, all mobile numbers are initially subscribed to a per kilobyte charging scheme, which was P0.05 per kilobyte sent/received.

Given how orchestrated he was with his Internet surfing, it was no surprise to me that he had accumulated P4,000 (yes, P4,000!) worth of Internet charges in just a weekend.

Imagine going to a graphics or photo-heavy website like Facebook. If the size of Facebook on Mobile's is at least 1 MB, that means it has just cost you 1,000 KB x 0.15 or P150, just for checking out whether your arms looked ginormous in that photo your friend recently tagged you in. (The cost of surfing measured in kilobytes.)

If you like looking at photos or watching videos via YouTube, or doing long periods of research on a browser for work, then time browsing is best for you.

Size matters

I decided to try out the iPhone's Push-No-Affectations feature, a way of having your data sent to you without you going through the constant motion of checking it.

I was so amazed that I started receiving my e-mails the way I'd receive true messages, it was instant gratification. When I got my bill a month later, I almost fainted when I saw that the total amount requested for me to pay was overlapping P15,000.

Apparently, push notification is a persistent tether; your device will keep pestering the server asking for new data for it to send back, meaning that for someone as time-browsing like yours truly, it means that I was on the Internet every minute of every day for what whole three weeks (506 hours on the 'Net!)

So if you spend most of your phone's Internet sending e-mail back and forth, then a volume-based data plan is the way to go. Whether your phone is constantly online checking the servers for updates, your time won't get charged until actual data is sent to your phone.

Choose your own adventure

After the P15,000 billing debacle, I stayed away from Push Notification like it was the plague. It wasn't until iPhone's new software update which utilizes push to the best way

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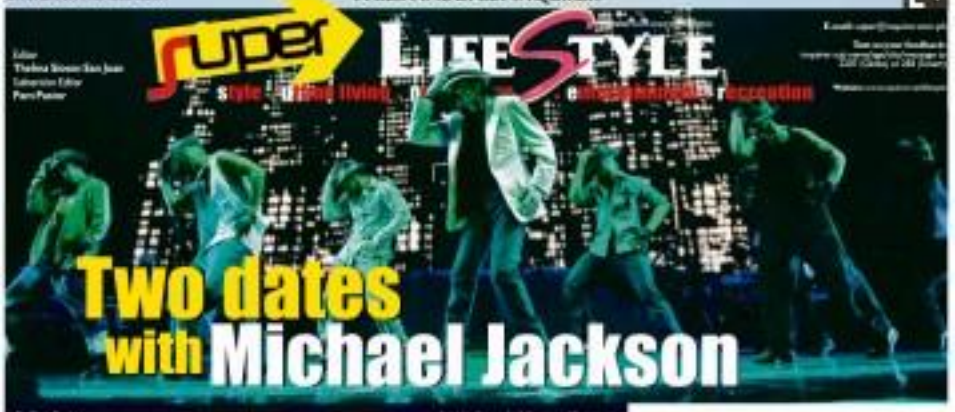


Two dates with Michael Jackson

By Paro Pastor

I CAN ONLY BLAME MY friends.

In a parallel universe, if I didn't hang out with the people I hang out with, if I wasn't constantly surrounded by Michael Jackson fanatics, I probably wouldn't even have seen "This Is It."

But since my world is full of people who send me links to his videos, make me listen to his songs, strap me down and make me watch DVDs, awesomely amused me and read me gems from the countless books written about him, I found myself locking a ticket to one of the first screenings weeks before the premiere.

"What if I were a Team Jordan shirt in the screening?" I asked Michael Jackson fan #1, referring to Jordan Chandler, one of the young boys who accused Jackson of molestation.

I was only kidding but Michael Jackson fan # 1 wasn't amused. She downward eye-rolled beside me at the screening.

Zero expectations

About a week later, I found myself walking into one of Shangri-La Mall's cinemas, ready to watch "This Is It" I was with 11 other people, all of whom were Michael Jackson fans, three of whom were dressed like Michael Jackson. Seriously.

And no, I didn't wear a Team Jordan shirt. I didn't want to be stabbed.

'This Is It' has achieved the impossible—and I'm not talking about its box office status worldwide. It's turned me into a Michael Jackson fan

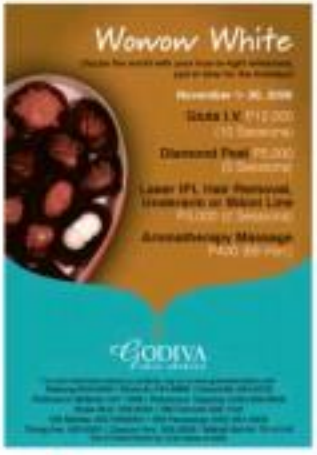
I sat in the packed theater with zero expectations. They previously watched superb video clips of his rehearsals to ease down into a pseudo-concert, I told myself. I will probably end up bored and will use up all my energy resisting the urge to bring out my Dr Love so I could play Cosmetic Paradise.

I was wrong.

"This Is It," if you've been living under a rock, is the concert film documenting the rehearsals for what would have been Michael Jackson's comeback series of concerts at London's O2 arena. The footage was originally intended for Jackson's personal library and not for public release. Kenny Ortega, the director and Jackson's creative partner for the concerts, directed the documentary Ortega said in an interview, "What I wanted to do was try, with the help of as many great people, to help the fans come to know what Michael's dream for 'This Is It' was. Every day I would wake up in the morning and I would call on Michael and I would say, 'Michael, be with me today, be in the room with me today and watch over all of this with me.'"

The film has many proxies—from enraged fans who feel that Jackson wouldn't have wanted the world to see the clips, to people who felt MJ's Live was just trying to make money off the dead pop icon and even from

TMDS III



SUPER EXCLUSIVE

The girl who stole the show

'This is your moment to shine.' Michael Jackson told 24-year-old Australian-Greek guitarist Orianthi Panagaris. Shine she did

By J.I. Cuevas

TWENTY-FOUR-YEAR-OLD Australian-Greek guitarist Orianthi Panagaris has stunned with a number of big revelations.

She played for fierce 'do when she was 15, jammed with Carlos Santana when she was 16, played with Prince, performed at the Rio Clapton Crossroads Guitar Festival and was Carrie Underwood's lead guitarist at the 11 in Grammy awards.

But this girl hit worldwide consciousness after becoming Michael Jackson's guitarist for the "This Is It" concerts. "This is your moment to shine and we'll be right there with you," Jackson told her in one of the homespun chats cut for more in the concert film "Michael Jackson's This Is It."

Jackson kept asking her to his highest notes and Panagaris did just that, feeling her fingers fly all over her guitar strings, producing many riffs.

Michael Jackson trained her to shine and shine Panagaris did.

How did you get involved in this project?

When I first heard about the possibility of auditioning for Michael Jackson, I thought it was a joke, and when four days later I was playing "Beat It" with him walking up and down the stage, it was surreal! I was so nervous and tried to keep it together, but there got to a point where he kind of left me alone with Kenny Ortega and also interacting with the dancers. Michael is very professional. I already had a huge respect for him before going in, but afterwards even more. So, I became a bigger fan due to how professional and rigorous he was and how he encouraged me to improve. I remember having my eyes with him playing "Billie Jean" and thinking that it was a dream come true.

What was he like as a person?

Michael was a very kind man, and he inspired and motivated me.

How long did you work on this project?

I worked with Michael for three months. Every night I would study the songs, and then I would go in the next day and rehearse them with the band. It was amazing because the band had the most incredible musicians. We were like family! Sometimes we would end the day really late, but we never minded.

Did Michael Jackson transform himself on stage?

He did, because he was an owner and police off stage, and then he would get up there and become larger than life. Onstage Michael Jackson communicated everything and was always in control.

How would you say your life has changed since meeting and having worked with him?

Michael Jackson made me believe in myself, and I am more communicated that he is not with us anymore.

How did you find out about the single news?

I was getting ready for rehearsal when they told us that he had been rushed off to hospital. And then when I heard the single news I wouldn't believe that someone so full of energy had gone. It just wasn't right!

What do you believe the documentary "This Is It" will show fits fans and the world?

It will show Michael's vision and how much he put into his last body of work, and also how incredible it would have been.

What was the most memorable thing he said to you?

I'll never forget the time when we were rehearsing and he told me that this was my moment to shine. He (me) he wanted me to hit his highest note. Michael was just really sweet and would constantly encourage us and tell us "God bless you." He was very generous and wanted everyone to shine and put on an amazing show.

Have emotional tabus to for you to play at his public memorial?

Closing up there was hard enough, but having also to perform was very tough. I was ecstatic.

What would you say was unique about Michael Jackson?

Everything. But especially the way he danced. He had the most amazing imagination.

How many of Michael Jackson's songs did you rehearse?

I worked on more than 20. They were hard to choose because he had so many hits!

What can you tell us about your new album Inspire?

I am super excited and very proud of it. It has an '80s vibe to it and I can't wait to go on tour and play all those songs. The music is that I can't imagine a day without going up and being able to play guitar, and I hope I can inspire other girls to do the same thing.

Kenny on Michael

"THIS IS IT" IS A GIFT TO MICHAEL JACKSON'S fans," says Kenny Ortega, director of the concert film. "As we began assembling the footage for the motion picture, we realized we captured some things extraordinary, unique and very special. It's very private, exclusive look into a creative pursuit's world. For the last time ever, fans will see Michael in their time never seen him before—the great artist at work. It is very emotional, moving and powerful. Footage that captures his tremendous talent, his professionalism and his kind presence. It is unmistakably Michael Jackson in his finest performance."

Ortega shares his thoughts on the last song of the concert and shared journey in recounting "This is It."

On packing 'Thriller':

Michael did like pushing the limits. He did like pushing technology and in the case of "This Is It" we had new technology with video, with costuming, with lighting, with sound, with person lyrics. I came to know very quickly that Michael liked things heavy, bigger, louder, so, in that manner, when I say "rule me the come 3.0" I just know Michael wouldn't be accepted if it wasn't bigger. Michael loved exciting costume around him, he loved the sound, big shows, because he created bombs. He would take them and then pull them himself, and make himself bigger and greater. There just weren't too many people like that.

On Michael's extraordinary gift:

I do believe that Michael was born with extraordinary gift. I just think that pressure to him—and/or he own worked with the people that inspired him beyond his own perverse genius as a child. I mean he was only like a 20-year-old at 7 or 8 years old, or 9 that kind of mindfulness and knowledge. I also do think that Michael was born with very, very special gift and a loss for what else he was doing. And that contributed to think it was a huge part of what made him

Two dates with M

Jackson's family for the honest recognition for "This Is It" with another story. The concert film has already broken records, has pre-sales, sales and box office records worldwide. It has gotten a 7.5 out of a perfect 10 rating on IMDB.com and an 82 percent on rottentomatoes.com, which means critics have given the film the thumbs up.

I did see.

Intensity

I sat in that dark theater and watched Jackson prepare for the concerts. I watched him interact with his musicians, his dancers, his singers and the production people. I saw how much work he put into the shows, his incredible attention to detail, his intensity, his love for music. I watched people cry about the impact Jackson made on their lives. I watched Jackson tell a young guitarist that it was hey time to shine (see related story). I watched Jackson's get teared. I watched him at the rundown of wardar Judith Hill. There were "best gorgeous dancers who can rock it," LCL sisters, dreadlocks and grooves, the sinewy, silver jackets, inspired piano and artist performance. There was Lindy who I'm sure is Fleetwood. There was a guest lockdown, there was crotch-grabbing.

My Oh Lite didn't even enter my mind for a second.

As forward of it all, there was applause.

The next time, I was ready to repeat the experience.

Fusion

I sat forward Friday night traffic and headed to 881 North Eden for an intense Michael Jackson fusion experience.

It was especially intense for the girls who sat in the row in front of us—they

They will rock you

16th MU 107 Rock Awards at the World Trade Center pays posthumous tribute to Francis M. in a stirring toast to local music

By Joy Sarreign

FLIPPED PEACE WAS JUDGES WITH the win. It's the biggest harmo gathered for when two rocked the summit of Pinoy rocks the annual MU 107 Rock awards.

At the awards' 16th year, the theme was High Definition, to refer to the technical expertise of Philippine recording and to the defining world of Philippine music.

Thus, it made perfect sense that the awards comprised an eclectic collection of artists presenting diverse styles, yet with a decidedly distinct Filipino flavor.

Hosts Iza Calzado and Rainier Beatriz kept the audience entertained as MU 107 roasted the best of local music.

The first award of the night went to Freya Alin, whose self-titled debut earned them the Best New Artist award. Frontman Ian Dayod was overwhelmingly celebrating his birthday that night so it must have been quite a gift when he and his bandmates went on to win two more awards: Carnaval of the Year for widely respected pic-long sweetheart Kahon Legaspi, and Producer of the Year for Robin Rivera, who has work to the podium 12 years ago for his work on the Eraserheads' "Pinakamaka."

Up Dharma Down was the night's other triple winner, bagging Album of the Year for its sophomore release, "Hipotic," a favorite of music critics and the general listening public.

The band also took home Artist of the Year, presented to them by three groundbreaking personalities: erstwhile Eraserheads members Ely Buendia, Raimund Marasigan and Buddy Zabala.

Up Dharma Down front woman Armi Millare provided one of the most touching moments of the night as she was visibly emotional while accepting the award for Female Artist Year, which she shared with Regine Velasquez (the Queen) who almost didn't make it to the stage since he was in the men's room when his name was announced.

Superbass' "Mornings and sixpers" also took home the award for Best Album Packaging. Millers took home two trophies as each

- Best New Artist – Freya Alin
- Carnaval Of The Year – Armi Millare and Up Dharma Down's "Kahon Legaspi (Pinyadito)"
- Carnaval Of The Year – Ashley Legaspi (Pinyadito)
- Record Of The Year – Ivan Kierulf (Hiling)
- Drummer Of The Year – Miguel Benitez (Eraserheads)
- Best Live Act – Hilera
- Song Of The Year – "Antukin" (Parokya Ni Edgar)
- Album Of The Year – "Hipotic" (Up Dharma Down)
- Artist Of The Year – Up Dharma Down
- Best Music Video – "Pancho Esquerra, "Last Dance on a Cruise Ship" (Bamboo)
- In The Face Award – Eraserheads
- Best Album Packaging – Inkscape, "Mornings and Sixpacks" (Sugarbabes)
- Producer Of The Year – Robin Rivera (Parokya)
- Listener's Choice Award – Chicosci
- Hall Of Fame – Francis M.
- Smart Local Endorsement Of The Year – Bro Charmee

Director Kenny Ortega talks about Michael Jackson –the man, the music, the incredible gift

Jackson Michael Jackson.

On seeing Michael through the creative process:

He seemed in touch with Michael's unconscious...and we reached the right balance for ourselves in rehearsals. And, you see Michael through the creative process as filmmakers, directors, choreographers, conceptual artist, band leader, musician, dancer. You are him from moment to the electric fabric as the production is being developed. And I felt that that as a great story to share with you here.

On why Michael wanted to do the tour:

He wanted his children to be able to see what [s]ome there he loved so much in his life. And they never still enough soon to be able to appreciate on his own, this intimate relationship with him again, as artist and audience. He loved his fans, they were the most loyal fans in the world, he would say all any artist. And he had real, very logical concerns. He was concerned about the future and the health and the finances of his children. All of those things are a part of this film. These relationships are there. You feel all of that in the body of this work. It was an important for me to show the fans what it was that Michael wanted to do, in a way to make sure that the reasons why Michael wanted to do it were ever present in the film.

On making his choices for the film:

I thought a lot about the fans, every day. What do they need, what do they want? How can you make this film a little gift for them?

On the film as a musical movie:

It's a film that definitely tells the story of a great genius, of a man of many, many talents. It's like you're getting a backstage pass, so you're not sort of peek into the world of a great genius, and watching him through his last creative process interacting with musicians, dancers, and singers, filmmakers, costume designers, production designers—fascinating with all of us. And, watching him in the creative process of his last theatrical work.

On Michael's genius:

Michael worked very, very hard to achieve what it was that he achieved, you know? But it also came naturally, he was an improvisational genius. He wouldn't know up to our lunch time. Unless at some of the stuff's last jazz outs out of a rehearsal performance. And the dancers who were half his age were bowling and screaming and screaming and just blown away.

On saying it with love:

Michael just had this passion that was sometimes every day, he'd say, "Do it with love, say it with love, say it with kindness. If you can't say it, then don't say it." And, he promised that. He was really the most loving and generous and considerate person. And so much of that generation, and all of that talent, all that spontaneity, there was also his genius, and amazing kindness to the way that he went about everything.

More Michael

Can't get enough of the King of Pop? Pick up these books and CDs

By Pam Pavao

DOUBLE DISC

Sony Music Entertainment's Columbia/Epic Label Group released "Michael Jackson's This Is It" two-disc album in conjunction with the worldwide release of the motion picture. One set features some of Michael's biggest hits including "Billie Jean," "Smooth Criminal," "Human Nature," and "Thriller." The disc ends with two versions of "This Is It," the original and an orchestral version. "This Is It," a never-before-released Michael Jackson song includes backing vocals by Michael's brothers. Disc two offers fans a new look—early demos and stories of demise. "Dirty Diana Off My Life," "Wanna Be Startin' ... Somethin'" and "Heal It." A recently discovered spoken word poem "Planet Earth" is also on the CD. With this release comes a 28-page commemorative booklet featuring exclusive photos of Michael from his last rehearsal.

Available at your favorite record stores.

UNMASKED: The Final Years of Michael Jackson. In this book, journalist and best-selling author Ian Halperin writes about his discussions after four years of investigation. The book explores the last years of Jackson's life—from the child molestation accusations and his marriage to Lisa Marie Presley to Debbie Rowe, his children and aftermath for the four consent years. "This book

genuine separates the bitter truth from the Hollywood lies and the media distortions of the life of this King of Pop," says the book.

I'M MICHAEL JACKSON, AND I'M GAY

by Faleen Shimony Gossett. According to the book, "I'm MICHAEL JACKSON and I'm GAY. Michael Jackson is the only true friend and confidant gay male I've ever had in my life. I've been with him since 1979 and I've been with him in Beverly Hills, in Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, in Las Vegas

TOY KINGDOM AMAZING WAREHOUSE SALE

CRUISE around the block in this Monsuno bike

THE Baker & Smart makes learning easy and fun

BOYZ can ride in style with this Chico TI jeep

With the holidays just around the corner, you'll be amazed at the great bargains at the Toy Kingdom Warehouse Sale on November 7 and 8 at Megatrade Hall 1 and 2 at the SM Megamall.

Now on its third year, this amazing sale gets bigger and better with up to 70% discount on selected items. It's a wonderland of toys that will fill any tots wish list from well- loved brands like Arctic, Lonelo, Megcos, Redbox, and Zipitto.

You'll find great deals on unlocking stuffets with your kids' favorite characters from Disney, Marvel, Cartoon Network, GI Joe the Rise of the Cobra, Transformers, and Barbie. There are toys for kids who have a need for action and speed like Hotwheels, Speedtech, Silverlit, Road Rats, and Dream Machine, as well gadgets for little techies from PSP and Nintendo.

Learning can be fun for kids with amazing discounts from educational toys from Alit, Little Tikes, Fisher Price, and Megabloks, as well as Crayola and Play Dough items that explore a child's creative side.

Shop early and shop smart for your kids this Christmas at Toy Kingdom's Warehouse Sale on November 7 and 8 at the Megatrade Hall. Also visit Toy Kingdom stores nearest you for more gift ideas. These are located at Toy Kingdom Express outlets at all SM Department Stores, and at Toy Kingdom outlets at SM Mall of Asia, The Podium, V-Mall, SM Megamall, SM Southmall, SM City Fairview, the Block at SM City North-EDSA, and the SM Mall of Asia. In the provincial areas, these are located at the SM Supermalls in Pampanga, Lucena, Molino, Baguio, Bacoor, and Batangas in Luzon, and Cebu, Iloilo, Bacolod, and Cagayan de Oro in the Visayas area.

HAKE this soap Frog Click Start your child's very first computer

GEAR up for speed with this remote controlled beetle car

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TRANSFORM into a princess with this Disney Pretty Dream Dresser

TECHIE girls will love this pink Nintendo DSi which now boasts in camera, music player and recorder

CREATE an exciting race circuit with this Tokyo Toy Kanni Micro GT-R. This set includes a super-toy remote-controlled car, t-start and finish gate, ramp pylons and eight corner parts

THE kids even will have tons of fun with this Fisher Price Little Superstar 3-in-1 Singing Band Walker

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IN THIS ISSUE

■ 'Precious' filmmaker to direct screen version of 'Miss Saigon' /G6

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor Rita P. Avila

SATURDAY Special

RICKETTS. New DMB chair.

Ricketts, Estrada back in the spotlight

By Nestor U. Torre

AFTER HONG KONDLA AND EDU Manzano, it's Ronnie Ricketts' turn to head the Optical Media Board, which is charged with the important task of fighting movie pirates' nefarious schemes and upholding producers' rights and welfare. Some people may find Ricketts a surprising choice, but those familiar with the self-effacing man praise Duque's principled work believe that he's the right person for the job.

For our part, we've enjoyed Ricketts's action-drama and action-comedy movies, because of their strong values content and breezy storytelling style. As film director, he has a cool visual eye that connects well with similarly cool young adult viewers.

"Bim, Hiwak Aasa!: been busy making action films of late, but that isn't his fault—it's the entire action filmmaking industry that's been sidelined for some years now. And, with more time on his hands, he can now pay more attention to his new chores at OMB, as everybody wins.

RICKETTS 6

ESTRADA. Long awaited comeback.

Skeletons in Hollywood celebs' closets

By Bebe Cervantes

DURING ITS GLORIOUS PAST, Hollywood created glamorous "back stories" for its stars. To begin with, they couldn't possess ordinary names. Stars were had names like Mercedes or Marianne. It was only after Humphrey Bogart and Marion Brando had introduced a new kind of stardom that scuffed of the earth than ordinary names became acceptable.

OBERON. The woman she introduced to the world as her "Indian maid" was, in fact, her mother.

Glamorous era

Now, movie stars need not look perfect like Robert Taylor or be as swashbuckly gorgeous as Ann Gardner. Would Julia Roberts have made it during the glamorous era of Arlene Judd and Joan Crawford? I think not.

In those days, any hint of scandal was conveniently "eliminated" by press agents who were hired by the big studios to keep the image of their contract stars wholesome and squeaky clean.

It was rumored of that a star like Merle Oberon would be anything else but a proper English lady. She actually came from Tasmania, a little known island south of Australia. Oberon went to Hollywood via England and was married to director Alexander Korda.

The actress starred in many successful romantic dramas. In fact, she and Laurence Olivier became Hollywood's most romantic pair after the success of "Wuthering Heights," where the former played the bedridden Catherine opposite Olivier's dark and brooding Heathcliff—never mind of Olivier really hated her guts, and vice versa.

Oberon was also considered one

BEBE CERVANTES F2

Ricketts . . .

...from page F1

The big questions now is, will Ricketts be as feisty, creative and pro-active a presidentiable as he needs to be? One bet is that he will more than measure up to the task—but, in his own way, unlike him of the superficial rough-guy antics that have sometimes been brought to the job in the past. In his own, sensitive way, Ricketts should rock.

Joseph's comeback

After years away from the movie camera, Joseph Estrada is about to make his long-awaited comeback by way of his own company with Ai-Ai delos Alas. Having enjoyed Joseph's performances in many past action-comedy productions, we're looking forward to seeing how he's come along as an actor.

With his dour, macho dead-pan portrayals, he could spring a box office surprise on young adult and teen viewers, who may have missed his earlier zingers—especially his comedic sparring sessions with his best buddy, Fernando Poe Jr.

Yes, FPJ was best known as a super action-action drama superstar. Every five years or so, however, he and Joseph would come in a big action-drama comedy. Markdemet, where they would first play feisty adversaries before finally joining forces to defeat dozens of scary bondbusters in the end.

Joseph also did his comedy films with the likes of Vilma Santos, Nora Aunor and Sharo Akoni-Ibn, so Ai Ai should have her work cut out for her keeping up with him in the comedy department, even if she's no slouch in that field herself.

It isn't likely that Joseph is going to quit his

MICHAEL TEE F2

Wise words for the weary

BE AWARE CONSTANTLY BATTERED BY GRIEFS and disasters. How can we cope with them? Some enlightening insights:

Nature has planted in the human heart the **ability to cope with any suffering that may come** to an unprovoked man.—Mahatma Gandhi

Set in the high heavens, sun in the depth of the seas, not in the rocky cliffs of the mountains...in none of these places can a man escape the consequences of the evil he has done.—Buddha

Stormy weather

Limb is not a defense fence that would withstand the slightest storm—we realize it's like the Himalayas, which cannot possibly change. No storm can move such mountains from their foundations. **I want you to embrace that faith in** the Supreme.—Maharaj Satsiji

A bad man is restricted amidst every adversity; a good man may be troubled on every side, yet **not be distressed nor perplexed.** A good man may be persecuted, but not forsaken or destroyed.—Plato

Prosperity has this property: it puffs up common souls, makes them imagine themselves high and mighty, and looks down upon the world with contempt. But, a truly noble spirit appears greatest in distress, then becomes brighter and more conspicuous.—Plutarch

The beloved of the Supreme are the rich who have the humility of the poor, and the poor who have the magnanimity of the rich.—Anand

Lotus Pond

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

Skeletons in Hollywood . . .

From page F1

of Thunderbird's most glamorous actresses. Years after, it was revealed that the Italian woman she introduced to the world as her maid was actually her mother, who was part Maori, from New Zealand.

First wife

Brenda Marshall came to Hollywood after Merle Jim, while William Holden's first wife said that she was born in the Philippines—in Negros Occidental, to be exact—she never admitted to public that she was half Filipino.

In the mid '50s, Anna Kashfi did the reverse. She claimed she was part Italian. Brando, who always had a penchant for dark-skinned beauties, was said to have married the actress for her "native" background. Their marriage seemed happy when the actor walked Dad Asian's mind to family backgrounds was only revealed by Kashfi and her agent to lend the Asians roles she was pursuing early on in her career.

Soon, they were exchanging serious accusations, spanked each other. Brando declared that Kashfi was an alcoholic and a drug dependent. On the other hand, the actress accused Brando of being a womanizing bisexual, who physically and verbally abused her. The actor had early some doors to smile—with cloud shed.

Ricketts...

From page F1

day job in politics, but if and when he decides to submit his career here once again, another bird around the first park wouldn't exactly be the worst prospect in the world.

What makes Joseph a real contender seriously are a fan light and naughty sense of timing. And, the newsworthiness and antiheroes he used to play may have been so tough as all get-out, but they also served both boys and viewers with many-pored glints of real sensibility.

Feasts and Finds at the TriNoma Green Light Sale

Golden trimmings everywhere, snowflakes and stars all aglow. Why, it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in Trilateral, thanks to its Green Light Sale. Trilateral's festivities start from November 13 to 15, 2009!

Crazy loads of early holiday shopping means beginning with up to 70% off and other delightful perks at participating establishments. Here's your chance to get first pick on all the latest holiday items at irresistibly low prices. With discounts like these, why put off Christmas shopping 'til the very last minute? The sale not only allows you to avoid the Christmas rush, but it lets you enjoy great bargains, too! You can even shop until midnight on November 13 and 14.

Taste the season

After a long day of shopping, why not sample all the season's finest offerings with some special foodie activities? Get tips and treats from none other than Chef Heny Sison for your upcoming parties and Noche Buena only at the Taste Matters culinary workshop on November 14, 2pm at the Cinema Lobby (Level 4). Then step into a food lover's paradise at the Gourmet Italian Bakery Tour from November 12 to 15, also at the Cinema Lobby. Take your pick from the sampling array of cakes and pastries, which could all serve as perfect treats and giveaways for office mates, family and friends or even just for yourself.

Shopping for a cause

And all the giving doesn't stop there. Shoppers also have the chance to share their blessings by participating in the Shop for a Cause program. After shopping and dining during the Green Light Sale, head over to the Lower 1 Concierge because for every P 1,000 single purchase receipt presented, P 1.00 will be donated to typhoon victims through the Ayala Foundation.

Glowing in the spirit

Best of all, catch some fun-filled entertainment and a heavenly show as the mall kicks off the holiday festivities with The Magical Glow of Christmas show on November 13, 8pm at the Trilateral Park.

So hurry, get your Christmas lists ready and let the shaving begin. Catch the yuletide spirit early only at Trilateral's Green Light Sale!

For DTI-NCR Permit # 4310802. Series of 2009. The Shop for a Cause program is a joint venture with the Ayala Foundation. For more info, visit www.greenlightsale.ph and TRIMAS MALL at 2888 or call the Concierge Hotline at 891-0888.

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Michael Bublé conquers pop chart anew with fusion of bluesy folk, jazz tunes

By Rito P. Asilo

IT TOOK ANOTHER FIREMEN and jazz album—Michael Bublé's "Crazy Love"—to dislodge Barbra Streisand's "Love is The Answer" from the No. 1 slot on the Billboard 200 chart.

A single spin of Bublé's bravura rendition of the title track, "Crazy Love," will make you understand why the adult-contemporary genius has been giving rock, pop and hip-hop acts a run for their money at the charts lately.

Tweaks and twists

His amount of technical craftsmanship—cue search the exhilarating power of lovely and masterful singing—especially Bublé's. With judicious vocal tweaks and twists, the debonair crooner breathes new life into well-loved or little-known standards.

Veering further away from the hyped-up grooves and (admittedly) pretty hours of 2007's "Totos" or 2008's "Save The Last Dance For Me," Bublé's latest album chooses a bluesy folk sound that's more Big Band ("All of Me," "You've Nobody Till Somebody Loves You") than ballroom.

The easygoing, harmony-laden baritone-soul-jazz singing and counterpointing of the a cappella group, Naturally 7, in Bublé's dreamy cover of Nat "King" Cole's "Straighten' down" ruins the spotlight away from the quality of the singer's exquisitely sparkling piano. Another impressive one in the bonus track, "Whatever It Takes," in which Bublé's rich baritone complements Ron Isley's higher, lighter voice.

MORE ON A3

BUBLÉ: More Big Band than balladeer in "Crazy Love."

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Explicit sex on television

By Nestor U. Torre

TELEVISION IS SUPPOSED TO BE a "for general patronage" medium, because it's on at all hours of the day and night, and impressionable children watch it all the time. Sometimes, however, youngest tots get relaxed and alarmingly graphic images end up startling viewers on that supposedly "safe" TV content.

Some years ago, a small cable TV station jolted viewers out of sleepy disinhibited by Cinderella's(?) sitting parts of a porno movie. Then, there came the time when a racy TV soap stretched the limits of what it was permitted to show and very nearly got into trouble with the country's official censorship body.

European sojourn

Those thoughts came to mind because we've just come back from a two-week European sojourn that took us to four countries, during which we were exposed to some pretty graphic images on that small TV screen. We were enraptured to see that, in the television sets we had European guests, there were hardly any brow-puckering graphic encounters.

On one European channel, a naked man and woman shared a bathtub with many of their personal and secondary external sexual characteristics compacted from public view. On another, a graphic and extended bed scene staged viewers' epidermis.

But, what took the cake was a re-

TINTIN medlicin daughter Antonia (left) the value of reading and good eye-care.

Advocacy inspires photo exhibit

THE ASIAN EYE INSTITUTE (AEI) HAS partnered with me as a photographer cum reading advocate in a photo exhibit at Rockwell Center's Power Plant Mall from Nov. 6 to 8 that aims to heighten awareness for healthy vision and reading.

The show includes 21 portraits of AEI patients who practice good reading habits and encourage the public to do the same.

Highlights of the three-day photo exhibit include read-along sessions with Tinchi Bersola-Babao and "Bailiwick" fairy Tony aka Bodjette Tanna, a lecture on basic nutrition, and eye drop sampling. There will be drop boxes for donations to PBBM's "Boop this Reading, Give Books" project for the benefit of public schools affected by Storm "Ondoy," as well as the "Eyeglasses for Hope" project of the Ophthalmological Foundation of the Philippines.

On exhibit are framed photos of Vice President Noli de Castro, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Lopez, Mr. and Mrs. Marcelo Lopez, Helena Benitez, Jovianito Zorilla Eulalaga and Joan Perez Zurita, former Chief Justice Andres Narvasa, Jose Mitra, Jr., Raul Lozano, Sen. Tito Sotto, Gwen Garci, Jaclyn Jose, Shiela Guanlao, Gina Lopez, Rally Altuna, Barbara Miranda-Ilac, Chato Suarez, Divine Aragon, Nesly Tantoco and daughter Catherine, Sup. Nikki Prieto-Teodoro and Tintin Bersola-Babao, with daughters Antonia.

***

For more photos, visit www.newsinfo.inquirer.net/pix/jyt.com. E-mail: mandysuzara@yahoo.com

Michael ...

Turn to page B2

Michael's songwriting skills are showcased in the breezy current single, "I Don't Met You Yet," and the cute-as-a-bug "Hold On," which obviously takes its inspiration from the melodic pursuits of the singer's lovely bro, Jermaine.

Other lesbian cuts in the repertoire include the bouncy up-tempo number, "All I Do Is Dream of You," and the sexy, swinging cover of the Gaghes' "Rhinestone Tonight."

ubiyong TV Shopping Channel's co, of all things, a really sweet-looking and apparently ratbo-charged—to boot. The powers of the revered op-ed gadget were granted in great detail by a very enthusiastic female pitchperson, who was then followed by a male counterpart, whose fascinating function was to assure male viewers that the last thing their female partners need the gadget didn't entail finally on their macho skills and powers.

Thank goodness, local viewers are spared such overly enthusiastic demonstrations and endorsements. And, we're not even talking about the sexy play for gay porn TV programs available for private viewing by some hotels' guests.

That last thought reminds us of the time when, decades ago, we visited a friend abroad and found him watching a "hot TV" cable channel whose programs included—a "made in-out" show with all of the nude and female anatomy exposing. Conversations were got a bad rap, but there are limits.

The fact that some interesting times and climes have thrown the fatby not with the fashionable in terms of "freedom" can't distract us from the fact that television is an "open" medium, so impressionable young viewers should be protected from graphic TV fare that they're too young to comfortably process and handle.

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GALLERIA
1 JENNIFER'S BODY
2 ALL ABOUT STEVE
3 500 DAYS OF SUMMER
4 LAW ABIDING CITIZEN
5 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
6 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
7 [illegible]
8 I LOVE DREAM GUYZ
9 ASTROBOY
10 PATIENT X

ERMITA
1 LAW ABIDING CITIZEN
2 I LOVE DREAMGUYZ
3 ALL ABOUT STEVE
4 ASTROBOY
5 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
6 PATIENT X
7 500 DAYS OF SUMMER

METRO EAST
1 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
2 ALL ABOUT STEVE
3 LAW ABIDING CITIZEN
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5 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
6 PATIENT X
7 JENNIFER'S BODY
8 ASTROBOY

NOVALICHES
1 ALL ABOUT STEVE
2 LAW ABIDING CITIZEN
3 PATIENT X
4 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT

PIONEER
1 ALL ABOUT STEVE
2 ASTROBOY
3 LAW ABIDING CITIZEN
4 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT

STA. ROSA
1 PATIENT X
2 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
3 LAW ABIDING CITIZEN
4 JENNIFER'S BODY

LIPA
1 HALLOWEEN 2
2 PATENT X
3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
4 BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT

DASMARINAS
1 PATIENT X
2 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
3 LAW ABIDING CITIZEN
4 500 DAYS OF SUMMER

IMUS
1 PATIENT X
2 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
3 LAW ABIDING CITIZEN
4 ALL ABOUT STEVE

STARMILLS
1 PATIENT X
2 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
3 500 DAYS OF SUMMER
4 RED CLIFF
5 SORORITY ROW
6 THE FINAL DESTINATION

ANGELES
1 PATIENT X
2 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
3 500 DAYS OF SUMMER
4 THE GAMER

TACLOBAN
1 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
2 PATIENT X
3 THE ECHO

BACOLOD
1 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
2 PATIENT X
3 THE ECHO
4 FAME
5 HALLOWEEN 2
6 THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE

ILOILO
1 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
2 PATIENT X
3 THE ECHO
4 THE HURT LOCKER
5 HALLOWEEN 2
6 RED CLIFF

GEN. SANTOS (NOW OPEN!)
1 PATIENT X
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BBH BY DANIEL SHELTON

ATOMIC LIVE WIRE BY LYN GARCELLANO

BIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

HOROSCOPE

BY MAGIC DRAKE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dr. Gary

		7		5		3		
			6		8			
1		8				7		9
	2						8	
7				9				1
	3						9	
2		5				9		6
			2		4			
		4		1		8		

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	6	7	3	1	2	4	5	9
9	4	1	7	6	5	2	3	8
3	5	2	8	4	9	6	1	7
1	8	5	4	9	3	7	2	6
4	2	6	5	7	8	1	9	3
7	3	9	1	2	6	8	4	5
2	7	8	9	5	1	3	6	4
5	1	4	6	3	7	9	8	2
6	9	3	2	8	4	5	7	1

NOW SHOWING

Constant flux of good and evil as Butler, Foxx square off

By Rito P Asilo

"Law Abiding Citizen"
D: F. Gary Gray
S: Kurtzman, Lindsey and Jessie Nickens

"SOMETHING HAPPENED TO right and wrong?" Jeffrey Clyde Shelton (Gerard Butler), the grief-stricken protagonist of F. Gary Gray's tension-filled action-drama, "Law Abiding Citizen," fit to be dragged off to prison after he takes matters into his own hands and exacts a measure of dog-eat-dog vengeance against the miscreants who murdered his wife and daughter 10 years ago.

Lessons

Shelton took to task the whole justice system for allowing many to supersede retribution. Thereafter, the brilliant former engineer delivers a threat to Assistant District Attorney Nick Rice (Jamie Foxx): "You just screwing up," Clyde assures, then explains further: "Lessons that aren't learned on the streets of Philadelphia are engulfed in a wave of terror as dead bodies begin to pile up—and Nick's family just might be Clyde's next target.

Gray spins an edge-of-your-seat yarn that for the most part relies on Butler's severe and dour machismo and Foxx's good guy-bad guy moral ambiguity to mask the production's weaknesses.

Butler and Foxx's dramatic square-off gets an added boost from the strong performances of Colm Meaney as Detective Dunnigan, Leslie Bibb as Nick's assistant, Annie Corley as the grieving judge, and Viola Davis as the city mayor caught in the crossfire of Clyde's "moral cleansing."

Clockwork precision

The movie is rife with scientific implausibilities, however. It's not easy for viewers to suspend disbelief that Clyde's brilliance—or his 10-year head start—is enough to explain his clockwork precision and logistical sharpness, given the circumstances he's in (no spoilers here).

Just the same, the production's zippy action and dramatic sequences keep the tension consistently high and the expositions moving. But, a film can raise one ethical question after another without getting overly didactic, can't it?

BUTLER AND FOXX. Moral ambiguity.

Fine-dining Chinese feast

Sandy Daza

I LOVE EXPERIMENTING many exceptional fine-dining Chinese luxuries in my life. One of these was in a Hong Kong restaurant called Fuk La Moon, where we were served the best of Hong Kong cuisine.

In the US, I've tried the best of San Francisco cuisine at the Hong Kong Flower Lounge restaurant. In Kindergarten, "dessert" was the in share of untouching the Chinese cuisine like Sin Mi Wah, which boasts of one of the best-tasting fried prawns.

I thought those were the only places that could make one another. I was wrong. My classmate Yolanda and I have been preparing for a reunion. "There was always someone who said he couldn't make it—until I told them it was going to be a luncheon prepared by one of the famous Hong Kong chefs in Manila today. Suddenly everyone was available.

Most delicious

As soon as we sat down, we were served warm peanuts, which excited like they were simmered in aromatic-flavored tea. After that, a crispy Peking duck was brought out, cut up and served in two ways. With Hoisin sauce on the side, it was pure perfection. Then, we were served the most delicious roasted skin of suckling pig. It was the leanest suckling pig I have ever eaten before.

We were then served a piping-hot bowl of shark's fin and crabmeat dumplings in a superior broth. You could tell that the chef put as much time in. Delicious!

Then, the main dishes started flowing in. We had roasted baby pigeon, with fried scallops with XO sauce, stir-fried tender beef with sweet walnuts and XO sauce, steamed siam fish in light soy sauce, sea monkey-abalone-style Delmich in stir-fried with dried shiitake, black beans and crispy garlic, steamed vegetables with garlic, salted fish fried rice, egg white fried rice with dried scallops and pine nuts, orange jelly and an Iran-Absa dessert, finish with hot cheese chocolate inside.

Sauce

I highly recommend the beef dish, which was so tender that it practically melted in my mouth. The sea monsters looked scary before it's cooked, but after it's dumped into a smoking wok, it is transformed into one of the best seafood dishes. The shrill and black bean sauce of this ubiquitous dish is also scaled that we always enjoyed with our rice.

Another scary-looking creature was the fresh stone fish, which, like the Japanese bluefish, can be poisonous when it's not prepared properly. However, it's terrific when prepared the way chef Chui Wing Ki does it. It was steamed in light soy sauce. The egg white fried rice with dried scallops was something new and delicious, too.

You can enjoy the same experience at the Jasmine Restaurant of the New World Hotel along Ayala st. and Makati ave. Call 811-0888. Happy eating!

E-mail: sandydaza@yahoo.ca

Hard-hitting docu blows lid off harmful food processing practices

By Nestor U. Torre

MOST OF THE MOVIES WE GET to watch are of the fiction, story-telling sort. So, when a full-length documentary like "Food, Inc." reaches our film or TV screens, it's a hungrily different viewing experience.

That goes double when the documentary in question is as topical and hard-hitting as Robert Kenner's exposé on the mass food production business in the United States. The production blows the lid off some unhealthy and sometimes downright horrendous processing practices that need to be addressed to secure the safety and good health of millions of consumers.

Specifically, "Food, Inc." homes in on the industrial production of meat. In the documentary's view, the whole process got into trouble when it shifted from small farms where cattle used to feed grass in huge conglomerates that now factor cattle, pigs and chickens on corn-based diets.

Big shift

The big shift led to undesirable excesses in pesticides and chemical fertilizer production that has polluted waterways and wreaked havoc on the world's ecological balance.

Even more disturbing is the way that modern meat production has tipped consistency diet in favor of excessive sugar and fat, resulting in the rise of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, not to mention increased risk from salmonella poisoning.

The documentary goes on to address corollary issues, like the industrial production of grains and vegetables, the excesses of which have turned out to be environmentally unsustainable.

Shortcuts

The whole food production process has unraveled, because commercial competition has made it imperative for the greatest amount of food to be produced in the least possible cost. For this to happen, dangerous shortcuts have been taken that have put the planet and its inhabitants at risk.

Depressingly, the production has been criticized by food chains for indulging in meaningless propaganda—like that subvert, instead of encourage intelligent and productive discussion. On the other hand, "Food, Inc." has been praised for its sobering exposé of excessive production practices that need to be modified to ensure the human race's health and safety.

A persistent observer, "Documentaries work when they illuminate and show what we think, and that makes 'Food, Inc.' a wealth of success and a must see film."

On the other hand, another commentator noted that the production "fails to realistically address how else we might feed the world on the sustainable agricultural model favored by the filmmakers."

Topical issues

Despite Roan and other negative notes, "Food, Inc." won a Golden Eye at the 2009 Zurich International Film Festival's documentary category. Would that such own documentary filmmakers could similarly shed light on other topical issues confronting the populace.

Like "Food, Inc.," they could end up stepping on a few toes and raise the hackles of some well-connected companies and organizations. But, they would definitely earn the support and gratitude of the viewing public, whose ailments real need and concern are glossed over by most of the TV shows they watch.

"FOOD, INC." Bracing viewing experience.

'More Than A Game'

From page G6

Travel with Zhang Ziyi

At 10 p.m. on Nov. 14, the "Zhang Ziyi Travel Series" will be launched on National Geographic Channel, with the popular international star taking viewers to Oman.

Star Magic concert

Star Magic's World Concert Tour: Live will take place on Nov. 13 at the Araneta Coliseum, under the auspices of Star Records. More than 20 Star Magic artists will perform, with proceeds to be donated to the Child Cleft Foundation's Sagip Kapamilya for the rehabilitation of flood victims. For tickets, call 911-5555.

Homebuilt Boat Regatta

The second time Yapatay Hoot Homebuilt Boat Regatta will be held today at the Taal Lake Yacht Club in Talisay, Batangas. For details, visit www.pinoysail.com.

"THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS." A chance for a toy run in Toy Kingdom.

'Wishology Toy Run'

Nickelodeon says welcome to "The Fairly OddParents: Wishology" Nov. 21 to 3 p.m. at Dec. 6 at SM Mall of Asia's Music Hall. The fun event gives you a chance to go on a toy run in Toy Kingdom to grab P50,000 worth of awesome toys.

Until Nov. 15, get an entry from participating Toy Kingdom branches, fill it in, tuckside the five golden words printed on it, and drop it in the designated drop box. For more details, log on to www.nickiplay.com.

Vote for there

Michael Paul and Jennifer Gonzalez are the only Pinoy couple to have made it to the semifinals of the Ultimate Thailand Undercover Honeymoon competition.

You have until Nov. 15 to vote for them. Log on to www.ultimatethailandexplorers.com by typing in your user name and password. Find Michael and Jennifer's video at the end of the page and double-click it. Register and vote for their video at www.tinyurl.com/mike-jennifer1.

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"MAGALING Ikaw" (inset) and "Kung ng Lingga" (left).

'Precious' filmmaker to direct screen version of 'Miss Saigon'

LOS ANGELES—Lee Daniels, whose "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire" is shaping up to be a serious contender in the awards season, confirmed with us that he is directing the movie adaptation of the musical, "Miss Saigon."

Lee showed up at our interview last Sunday morning with his terrific actress—Mo'Nique, Gabourney Sidibe and Paula Patton—and singer Mary J. Blige who sang the film's theme song. (The following day, we interviewed Lee's other actress, Mariah Carey, who also performed in a memorable performance in a small role.) The director in his mid-40s, though, that he'll be doing "Selma" film. "Selma" is a civil rights drama that revolves around President Lyndon Johnson during the March in Luther King Jr. led marches in Selma, Alabama.

Only in Hollywood

Robert V. Nepales

Script

We had interviewed the filmmaker earlier about "Precious" the movie. Precious (Sidibe) was a virtual unknown before the film, but before news of the "Miss Saigon" movie project broke out. In our recent talk, Lee stressed that he was strolling over how to effectively adapt "Miss Saigon" from stage to screen. "How to make that leap?" Lee asked aloud. He said that the script has yet to be written.

Cameron Mackintosh, who's the original stage producer of the Vietnam War-set musical that topped Les Salonga and other Filipino thespians, is completely involved in the film adaptation, according to Lee. Cameron and Paula Wagner, Tom Cruise's former producing partner, are executive producers.

We told Lee that "Miss Saigon" has spawned a "mini-industry" for Filipino performers all over the world, thanks to countless productions that have featured Pinoy talents. When we informed him about a current production directed by Filipino-American, Joel Lawrence Rivera, at the California State University Fullerton, Lee wanted to check it out and asked for the production dates (it ends this weekend)...more information at www.fullerton.edu/arts/theatre/season.htm. The director declined that they're considering filming in Saigon.

In the evening of last Sunday, "Precious" had its Hollywood premiere in a gala screening, as part of the film festival of the Los Angeles Film Festival at the famed Grauman's Chinese Theater. As if the Oscar buzz for "Precious" wasn't enough, the premiere of Oprah Winfrey, who is the film's executive producer, added to the hyper-excitement at the Old Town.

Stars showed up on Hollywood Blvd. to see Mariah and her entourage, parents who included Will and Annie Smith, but most especially O herself. Inside the theater, Lee and the cast were introduced individually to resounding applause. The director invited Mariah around.

But, when Oprah walked up to join the group, the audience,

Oprah (center), with Gerrie and the author (left), Janet.

including our guests, diverse faces like Gloria ("Floating") and Filipino community leader, Peony dela Cruz, went into a spray for Prissy who credits Oprah for turning her life around, it was a moment she had long dreamed about.

Adversity

The star record: showing of "Precious," the film held up well. The film's story of Precious (Gabourey) who struggles to overcome adversity, including the cruelty of her mom, Jennifer (Mo'Nique), is still gripping. The acting performances of Mo'Nique, Gabourney Sidibe (as a compassionate teacher), and Carey (as a social worker) are Lee's finest achievement as a director.

The Oprah movie continued at the party held at another Hollywood landmark, Chateau Marmont. The crowd kept spur as only when Mary J. Blige performed the theme song from the movie, "I Can See It's Color," with each passion and emotion. Lee was visibly moved. The gorgeous Paula and her husband, singer Robin Thicke, danced in the moving rendition by the singer. In the hotel's garden, Sapphire, whose first novel, "Push," started off this living Ashford congratulations.

As Oprah exited the party she was cuddled again. Amid the pandemonium, Prissy managed to tell her idol, "Oprah, thank you for bringing me light." Without missing a beat, O responded, "Yes, the light. Thank you for bringing that." Prissy dried tears of joy.

With such a persuasive and popular cupmakeover behind the film, and backed by its own movie, "Precious" could, indeed, be headed for the Oscars.

E-mail remarks: VMP@inquirer.com.ph and read his blog, "The Nipulse Report," at: http://blogs.inquirer.net/nepalsreport

Art exhibit and dialogue with Araceli Limcaco Dans at UP Los Baños

ARACELI LIMCACO DANS pays tribute to the centennial celebration of UP Los Baños with an opening display of drawings and paintings. The exhibit will be her new floral paintings of the hibiscus (gumamela) done blooms in her garden. The gumamela in her paintings are enhanced by transparent cloudy paper cloth embroidered appeal of these paintings. It will be her tribute to the Sesquicentennial of UP Los Baños.

To complement her floral paintings, Dans also exhibits drawings from her Filipino series, as well as her recent paintings on stone slabs inscribed on petrified wood cards.

Preview of the exhibit will be on Nov. 29 at 3 p.m. for Metro Manila residents who wish to avoid the weekday traffic. The formal opening for students, faculty and collegiate will be held on Dec. 1 at 3 p.m., to be followed by an informal lecture with Dans.

The Dans exhibit is the culmination of a series of art exhibits at the Strong Modeling Gallery, at U.L. Donald Hall in UP Los Baños, curated by multitalented sculptor Jaime Jr. Bautista the Office of Initiatives in Culture and the arts under Dr. Marivic Soliven. Gallery hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

'More Than A Game'

THE TALENTED YOUNG basketball players star in "More Than A Game," a biographical documentary on NBA superstar LeBron James, expanded by some as one of the greatest athletes of his generation.

Kristopher Belman's film features five young basketball players from Akron, Ohio, called the Fab Five. Their coach is a hard-driving, charismatic, but unsupervised player's father. Their leader—future NBA great, LeBron James.

Their nine-year journey takes the Fab Five from a decrepit inner-city gym to a national high school championship. The cluster that team is repeatedly tested as James' unparalleled talent explodes into worldwide celebrity, threatening everything they've set out to achieve together.

Like Belman, producers Hanrey Mustat, it believes that the true story went be-yond the team's on-court heroics. "But, football is just the vehicle that moved our characters forward," he observes. "At the heart of the film is their friendship, and what they sacrificed for each other."

Choral competition

Manila Broadcasting Company has launched a nationwide search for the best choirs in the land. SBC National Choral Competition eliminations will be held on Nov. 7-8 in the Ahu Theater, Nov. 12-13 Cagayan de Oro, Nov. 14 in Cebu, Nov. 15 in Iloilo and Nov. 16 in Davao. Semifinals are scheduled on Dec. 15-16 at Star Theater, capped by the Grand Finals at the Ahu Theater on Dec. 19. Log on to manilabroadcasting.com/choir.php.com

Montage

'Frankman 3D'

Jim Beam is looking for the outstanding musician who has the vocal prowess and charisma to sing his country cover with Jim Beam's "Frankman 3000" search. Upload performance videos or music files on the Jim Beam Frankman Facebook page, or log on to www.facebook.com and click on the Jim Beam Frankman banner.

Ang.alk will be at Lights hours in Subic on Nov. 21. Out gone in Cebu on Nov. 27, Blue-post in Iloilo on Dec. 2, Subic-Intense in Angeles on Dec. 4 ring.net on Dec. 8 and Alcohol Bank Café Makati on Dec. 18. For details, e-mail dsmo@ymail.com.ph.

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JAMES, Rookie Sensation

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